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Ngaligura Wangkabinyarri, Banthaga, Jardimarri = We Talk, We Listen, We Embrace : Aboriginal Mothers as a Major Contributor to Their Daughters' Participation and Achievement in Tertiary Education

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Ngaligura Wangkabinyarri,

Banthaga, Jardimarri

(We talk, we listen, we embrace)



**Aboriginal mothers as a
major contributor to their daughters'
participation and achievement in tertiary
education.**

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USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Aboriginal mothers as one of the major variables to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education.

It presents the findings of research that investigated specific nurturing behaviours of four Aboriginal mothers who assisted their adult daughters to participate and achieve in tertiary education. The research is qualitative in nature and research data was collected using interviews and ethnographic observations of the eight participants over a two and a half - year period. The observations and interviews were made of Aboriginal mothers whose daughters had achieved a degree or diploma through a university or further education institution. The findings show that these Aboriginal mothers have made a significant contribution to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education. This has occurred through the demonstration of specific nurturing behaviours that have continued throughout their daughters' adult years, and which have been exhibited in the physical and emotional environments that these mothers have created.

The research shows that Aboriginal mothers, given that they create functional and supportive environments, have the capacity to significantly contribute to the success of their daughters' tertiary pursuits. The behaviours and attributes demonstrated by these Aboriginal mothers in these functional and supportive environments were found to be: (1) Pride (2) Optimism (3) Goal Orientation and Discipline (4) Devotion and Communication (5) Role - modelling (6) Autonomy in Decision Making and (7) Strength and Tenacity.

The implications of this research may have consequences for Aboriginal education and parenting programs by providing information as to which factors contribute to the building of a firm educational basis for Aboriginal girls and which factors support the attainment of academic goals through the provision of supportive and nurturing family relationships.

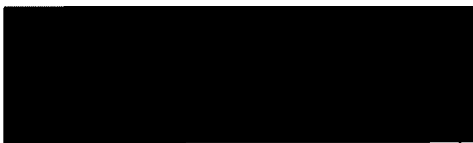
DECLARATION

I CERTIFY THAT THIS THESIS DOES NOT, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF;

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ODETTE HALEY ~ BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (HONOURS) CANDIDATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research would not have been possible without the wholehearted assistance of the Pilbara Aboriginal women in this study who have been drawn from the following language groups: **Nyangumarda, Nyul Nyal, Punjima and Kariyarra**. To these women, I give my sincerest thanks and appreciation. My gratitude is also extended to the Aboriginal women who have assisted in mentoring me throughout this study, Aunty Maureen Kelly and Aunty Betty Lockyer. Their generosity and frankness has contributed greatly to the understanding of the social and educational issues that have impacted and continue to impact on the lives of Aboriginal women in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

The acknowledgements listed here would not be complete without including my husband Peter and five children. To them, I am very grateful for their support, encouragement and understanding, especially in those moments when it would have been much easier to give up than continue.

Finally, my respectful thanks is given to the Aboriginal elder women who have provided their blessing and an appropriate title for this study,

Ngaligura Wangkabinyarri, Banthaga, Jardimarri.

We talk, we listen, we embrace.

It is an assumption of this research that all the women in the study will take ownership of the knowledge. In this way the research has endeavoured to respect the intellectual property of those women who have contributed their time, labour, knowledge and life experience to enhancing our understanding of issues affecting Aboriginal women in the fields of education and anthropology.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background to the Study.

This thesis is the direct result of four ethnographic investigations carried out by the researcher over the period 1995 -1997.

The first investigation was a pilot study conducted by the researcher in 1995 that attempted to isolate the key variables that Aboriginal women, employed in the public sector, were exposed to and which challenged and motivated them to pursue higher education.

The second investigation involved a small study that analysed the effect of government policy on three Aboriginal women who were educated in three different eras of Aboriginal education in Western Australia.

The third investigation involved an ethnographic study which provided cultural information, gained in formal and informal, social and educational settings from Aboriginal women with whom the researcher had developed a solid relationship over the past three and a half years.

The fourth investigation comprised ethnographic observations, made over a two and a half-year period, of particular Aboriginal family groups who lived in the Pilbara region. Many of the daughters of these families were and remain employed in various government offices and educational institutions and have undertaken degrees and/or diplomas at tertiary level.

What became increasingly apparent in these observations was that these Aboriginal families were led by authoritative female elders. These mothers were well respected in their communities and this was demonstrated at community meetings in that they were consulted openly and frequently regarding everyday matters and they asserted their opinions on a regular basis when decisions affecting the community had to be made. These mothers frequently challenged senior Aboriginal men especially in matters that concerned the old people and the children. This assertiveness was not generally exhibited in a loud or aggressive manner. Their influence was demonstrated in covert or subtle behaviours, including the use of body language to communicate to others attending the meetings such by nods, smiles, shakes of the head and displays of affection and approval such as patting on the arms, shoulders or backs. These Aboriginal mothers were quick to give their verbal approval or disapproval to suggestions, but were careful not to interrupt another person whilst they were voicing their opinion, maintaining their regard for others at all times.

These and other observations suggested that Aboriginal mothers were the pivotal force behind their families and the driving force behind many community initiatives designed to foster change in the Aboriginal community. They therefore contribute significantly to Aboriginal self determination.

Although only a brief overview, what became apparent in the analysis of the interviews of the daughters of these Aboriginal women was that their mothers had been active in articulating and supporting the necessity to obtain a sound education in order to function successfully in both contemporary Aboriginal and non - Aboriginal societies. This relationship between Aboriginal mothers and

daughters is the pivotal point of this thesis as it is this relationship which is being examined.

However, in order to fully appreciate this Aboriginal mother/daughter relationship, it is important to investigate how other relationships within the Aboriginal family unit function. Furthermore, it is necessary to recognise how these relationships may be different to that of the mother/daughter relationship in connection to Aboriginal daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education.

Traditionally, as the review of the literature will show, the dominant control over child-rearing was carried out by Aboriginal mothers. Young Aboriginal girls modelled themselves on their mothers and other women of the community, as it was they who provided the intimate knowledge regarding economic and cultural survival. According to Berndt and Berndt (1964) before and during adolescence young girls were increasingly separated from the male members of the community and spent the majority of their time with their female kinship group. Possibly the reason for this was to not only intimately socialise young girls into their gender roles and responsibilities, but also to ensure the transmission of knowledge regarding other cultural knowledge. In comparison, young males were separated and spent increasingly long periods of time with older males of the group for the same reasons. This division of sexes was displayed in many traditional social contexts.

In a contemporary setting, ethnographic observations and interview responses suggest that the Aboriginal daughters in this study were significantly influenced by their mothers. However, three out of four daughters acknowledged the contribution of their fathers in their participation and achievement in tertiary

education which may suggest that a functional model of father/daughter relationships is developing or has existed within some Aboriginal families.

Additionally, Aboriginal mother and son relationships often appear to fragment around the time of adolescence when Aboriginal fathers may take on a more disciplinary role, in conjunction with the influence of the adolescent male peer group. This appears to determine the behaviour of many young adolescent males who may then choose to leave formal schooling in favour of a less disciplined lifestyle. Aboriginal daughters tend to migrate toward their female kin and peer group, so it is in the context of gender identification that much of the hypothesis has been developed.

Whilst the above are only suppositions it is important to isolate the variables as to why the mother/daughter relationship has been so critical to some Aboriginal daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education.

Aboriginal mothers in this research have been labelled as 'successful' and major contributors to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education. Therefore, this research investigates those behaviours that make Aboriginal mothers successful at influencing their daughters to participate and achieve in tertiary education.

This research has drawn on the outstanding issues from the ethnographic studies carried out by the researcher which have been described in the chapter introduction. These previous studies have provided the impetus, direction and preferred methodology for the research. Additionally, the research includes a two-way perspective due to the relationship between the respondents, in this case, biological mothers and daughters. It examines the physical and emotional

environments that Aboriginal mothers provide which contribute in a significant way to their daughters' participation in tertiary education. These environments (see flow chart. p.58) provide the setting by which Aboriginal mothers are able to exert their influence on their daughters. Imbedded in these environments are the behaviours that Aboriginal mothers exhibit, which might support some Aboriginal daughters as they engage in tertiary study.

The study is not so much about the level of achievement in formal Western education of these Aboriginal daughters, as an investigation of the vision and demonstrated commitment that Aboriginal mothers foster in their daughters, in order to develop the strength, commitment, tenacity and ability required to survive in the primary and secondary educational spheres and into the tertiary sector.

Significance of the Study

The achievement of educational outcomes, including entrance into university or T.A.F.E (Technical and Further Education) institutions, is often seen as a measure of success for individuals who have undertaken a western-based education. This is especially so for many Aboriginal women who often gain greater acceptance from the non-Aboriginal community as a result of having obtained a degree. Their status may also increase within the non-Aboriginal community. These women are often labelled as *successful* by the mainstream society and non-Aboriginal community alike, as they are deemed to have achieved a level of equality in education - the same as non-Aboriginal women (ethnographic notes, 1995).

Access to education in Australia, especially for Aboriginal women, has not always been equitable, with a disproportionate percentage of the non-Aboriginal

female population, compared with the Aboriginal population, obtaining educational qualifications. It could be conceived then, that the quest for Aboriginal women to achieve qualifications through participation in tertiary education is perhaps more difficult for Aboriginal women than for their non-Aboriginal female peers and Aboriginal male counterparts, considering the cultural constraints and responsibilities assigned to Aboriginal women. The latter is assumed on the basis that Aboriginal men are allowed more freedom and independence away from the family group than is the case for Aboriginal women.

Many Aboriginal men, despite having fathered children, appear to leave much of the child rearing responsibility to the women of the community (ethnographic notes, 1995). This lack of direct input into the upbringing of their children places additional responsibilities on the Aboriginal women as they are often left to cope by themselves and these factors may prevent them from pursuing any personal goals due to demanding cultural, economic and familial situations.

In order to cope with their family and academic responsibilities, some Aboriginal daughters, effectively use their mothers as a resource to counter balance these imposed limitations which may prevent them accessing tertiary education.

Examining the role Aboriginal mothers play in their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education may redress this disadvantage by assisting in the development and review of education programs that Aboriginal daughters participate in.

The Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this research has been to investigate the role of Aboriginal mothers in their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education. However, it is anticipated that there will be four outcomes at the conclusion of this study. These are stated as follows:

- (1) a knowledge of the specific behaviours that Aboriginal mothers demonstrate that significantly contribute to their daughters' attainment in tertiary education,
- (2) an understanding of the pre-requisite educational factors that provide a sound foundation for Aboriginal daughters to be able to pursue tertiary education,
- (3) an identification of other variables that contribute to the attainment of a tertiary qualification for Aboriginal women,
- (4) a basic understanding of how Aboriginal Education and Parenting programs can most effectively benefit from knowledge regarding educationally supportive child-rearing practices.

Hypothesis

This study is designed to investigate Aboriginal mothers as a major contributor to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education. It aims to explore the notion of Aboriginal mothers' significance in the achievement of their daughters' educational goals and having established this factor will analyse the behaviours Aboriginal mothers demonstrate in providing both physical and emotional environments for their daughters. The research questions that are being explored include:

"What are the behaviours that some Aboriginal mothers demonstrate which assist their daughters through the educational process?"

What behaviours do some Aboriginal mothers exhibit which significantly contribute to their daughters undertaking studies at a tertiary level?

What behaviours do these Aboriginal mothers demonstrate that make them different from other Aboriginal mothers in terms of assisting their daughters to participation and achievement in tertiary education?

What types of physical and emotional environments need to be created for Aboriginal daughters if they are to participate and achieve in tertiary education?

Definition of Terms

Research in an intercultural context often faces the difficulty of misinterpretation as a result of the particular *cultural conditioning* that both the researcher and the respondents have been exposed to. Similarly, the language that is being used by the researcher to convey concepts often creates difficulties because those expressions in the subject's culture may not hold an exact meaning.

In this study the term '*education*' may be interpreted differently by subjects drawn from another cultural background and for this reason a formal definition is required for clarification.

Education is the process of providing systematic instruction and/or to train or instruct mentally and morally, (Oxford Dictionary, 1995). Education has long been regarded by academics, political parties and leaders as being the means by which individuals are able to gain the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to enter the echelons of societal power. In addition it may be argued that western education is a system by which individuals are able

to access employment and subsequently gain a degree of economic independence as a result of the knowledge and skills acquired.

Education in the context of this study implies the learning of the school curriculum. The term '*education*' may also imply the processes of schooling and socialisation. Schooling is the sequential acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes, developed by trained teachers necessary for the individual to advance to the next level of learning. Socialisation is the whole process by which individuals learn to become human beings and learn to communicate and interact within a group in order to function as a group member. As socialisation takes place within the contexts of groups it could be assumed that to a large extent, most Australian children's socialisation takes place within the context of the school, the family and the society. According to Partington and Mc Cudden (1992, p. 35):

"The institution of schooling evolved in Western societies prepares the young to participate in society. It is a specialised institution, and a particular culture and structure have developed. The education that takes place in school is regarded as formal education, in contrast to the education which occurs elsewhere, which is largely informal."

In Aboriginal society a cultural education process is in place, the focus of this cultural education is informal, in a context that gives it immediate meaning and is taught by the assigned adults whose authoritative teaching roles are determined by the kinship system.

Aboriginal women in this study would have been exposed to both forms of education. Firstly, to support their cultural identity as Aboriginal women and secondly, to support their education and resultant economic survival in the mainstream society.

This second notion has been supported by the Aboriginal community who of its own accord and in conjunction with government policy has fought to address educational inequities that have prevented Aboriginal people from participating in formal Western education. However, attempts at overcoming the barriers to participation for Aboriginal people (according to some women in the Aboriginal community) had not been successful in rectifying these demonstrated differences prior to the introduction of Social Justice policies by the Whitlam Labor Government in the 1970s (ethnographic notes, 1995). These Labor policies attempted to create access and equity at all levels of the governmental structure and in doing so many initiatives were implemented in the areas of Aboriginal health, welfare and educational systems. These policies focused attention on issues of discrimination and were encompassed under the umbrellas of gender bias, disability, English as a second language and racism.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

This chapter will identify previous research in the area of Aboriginal women and their involvement in education. It will review the literature in relation to the hypothesis and in doing so investigate the role that education has within the context of the Aboriginal community and of its relationship to Aboriginal women and tertiary education. In doing so it may be possible to understand the motivating factors which influence Aboriginal women and their goal of a tertiary education.

A review of the literature has shown that there is minimal research in regards to this area concerning Aboriginal mothers and their daughters and as such the findings and will contribute to this little known area of Aboriginal education. The literature review will:

- (1) explore the benefits of a western education for members of the Aboriginal community,
- (2) investigate the spheres of influence that Aboriginal women held in a traditional context and how these have implications for this research,
- (3) explore ways that Aboriginal women have proactively supported formal Western education in the Aboriginal community, and
- (4) identify the Aboriginal mother and daughter relationship and its connection to Aboriginal women's perceptions of the role of formal Western education in their children's lives.

In order to do this, it is important to examine the concept of formal Western education from the Aboriginal community's perspective as it is often the

collective perspective that shapes the direction of the individual members (in this case Aboriginal women) within that community. Equally, it is important to consider that the notion of success may not hold parallel meaning in the Aboriginal worldview as compared to the Anglo-Celtic worldview. For these reasons the following section will explore formal Western education from the Aboriginal communities perspective.

Formal Western Education

Aboriginal peoples' stance toward formal Western education varies according to the social and cultural context, the orientation and the purpose it is being obtained.

Willmot (1991) cited in the Schools Council Report – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education in the Early Years (1992, p.3) argues that:

"The idea of an Aboriginal asset holds within it the significance of education. If the asset has the element of political status, land and education then achievement in the latter is necessary for the achievement of the other two. In other words education is seen as the crucial means of achieving empowerment".

Bucknell (1982) and Briscoe (1980) have reported that Aboriginal communities of differing orientations have frequently spoken of their desire for their children to learn to be able to read and write and do mathematics in order to be able to function and deal with the mainstream culture. The accomplishment of these processes then enables them to make effective choices in their lives. Bucknell (1982) reports in *'Listening to Aboriginal Voices'*, that to create a socially and

economically viable Aboriginal community within a large indifferent and often hostile wider Australian community, one of the strategies employed to assist in the achievement of this objective was that white teachers were employed to teach adults and children basic literacy and numeracy skills in both the vernacular and English.

This imperative to achieve basic literacy and numeracy is also elaborated upon by Briscoe (1980, p.30) who reports that: "Aboriginals have to learn to read and write to a degree of proficiency". As the literature suggests, the Aboriginal community has stated the need for its members to possess basic levels of education for survival within the larger mainstream community. Aboriginal mothers, as the pivotal and driving force in their families, have taken on the implementation of this community vision by ensuring that their children have access to a school, and that their children are provided with the physical and emotional environments to facilitate positive outcomes in formal Western education as members of the Aboriginal community".

Aboriginal mothers are partly connected with the formal Western education process by the very nature of their role as providers and carers. It is they who support the necessity of a formal Western education by members of the Aboriginal community. They do this by ensuring that their children are provided with the necessary physical and emotional environments to achieve in the formal Western educational system. Further aspects to this will be discussed in the next chapter.

Traditional Roles of Aboriginal Mothers

In order to fully understand the contemporary role that Aboriginal mothers play in directing the course of their daughters' education, it is important to examine the literature on Aboriginal mothers' roles in a traditional setting. In addition to this, the nature of the relationships between Aboriginal mothers and daughters and Aboriginal women in general will be investigated.

Aboriginal mothers in a traditional society maintained four main spheres of influence. One major sphere was the dominant control over child-rearing practices. The identification of these areas is supported by the research of Berndt and Berndt (1964), Brennan (1980), Gale (1986), Watts (1981) and Hamilton (1981).

Berndt and Berndt (1964) in a study of childhood, document the social movement of girls toward older women on whom they have already modelled their behaviour and on whom they will continue to model themselves on.

In relation to this factor, Berndt and Berndt (1964) suggest that it was in the best interest of the kinship group that Aboriginal women formed strong bonds which facilitated transference of knowledge about women's business and methods of survival. In a paper presented to a conference on Aboriginal studies, Berndt (1963) quoted by Gale (1986, pp.75, 76) asserted that "Aboriginal women were on the whole, relatively speaking - relative to men - domestic centred or family centred...." Parent - child relationships although appearing to be dominated by males were in actuality controlled by Aboriginal women.

Therefore, Aboriginal women in traditional society had held a fair degree of autonomy and economically they maintained considerable independence. The remainder of the time was spent in communal living in which children learnt by observation and imitation of the older children and adults (Hamilton, 1981).

The second sphere of influence was that of Aboriginal women's role as primary providers. It is estimated by Gould (1969) that Aboriginal women provided an approximate seventy to eighty per cent of the total food supplies. In this role, Aboriginal women had to inculcate an extensive knowledge of the land and the seasons to effectively access food sources. In light of this evidence then, it is possible to assume that not only were Aboriginal women the providers in terms of daily survival but that the society relied heavily on their ability and skills to find food. This would then classify them as the major economic providers of Aboriginal society, a role that they have continued to fulfil in a modern context. In terms of this study Aboriginal women become effective economic providers by the gaining of an academic degree which assures them of a well paying job. This is especially so given that many job positions are currently advertised under Section 50D of the Equal Opportunity Act (1984), and as such Aboriginality is a pre-requisite for the advertised position. This ensures that only Aboriginal people are placed into certain positions that require them to meet two basic criteria for employment. The first is an understanding of the Western-based bureaucratic system which they often meet by the attainment of a university degree, and secondly, an in depth knowledge of Aboriginal society which is assumed by their identification as an Aboriginal person.

The third sphere of influence that Aboriginal mothers held in traditional society was that of emotional management. The study by Bell (cited in Edwards, 1990, p. 240) of Aboriginal women and the religious experience found that:

"Aboriginal women's complex relationship between the living and the land is manifested in the intertwining of the ritual foci of health and emotional management... Thus today, women's role in the domain of emotional management is truly awesome".

Contemporary Roles of Aboriginal Mothers

If Aboriginal women were responsible for those survival roles and spheres of influence in traditional society, is it not possible to propose that those behaviors related to economic survival and emotional management have and continue to be demonstrated and articulated in a contemporary social context?

Economic survival as a traditional societal imperative of Aboriginal women has shown to articulate into a modern context and this is reflected in current literature regarding Aboriginal women's involvement in their children's education.

The full involvement in issues regarding the education of their children and of its connection to economic survival is demonstrated in a number of ways. Involvement can be shown by the domination of Aboriginal teachers and teacher aides in the Northern Territory Bilingual Education programs. Further to this, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs cited by Gale (1983) in Foster (1987) stated that:

"This indicates the growing concern of Aboriginal women in the education of their children. All Aborigines, but especially mothers, are concerned about what and how their children are taught in school" (pp.159, 160).

Aboriginal mothers' involvement in their children's education is also examined in the research of Keary (1993). This study has been significant in documenting the stance that many Aboriginal and Islander women hold toward education and of the role that they play in promoting and accessing that education. One respondent (Ida) involved in the Palm Island study talks about formal Western education and its connection to political control. In light of this statement, it could be supposed that some Aboriginal mothers do possess a keen insight, as to what benefits a sound education will bring. Aboriginal mothers also acknowledge the need to be actively involved in these processes as paramount to their children's successful rearing into adulthood and the achievement of a sound education.

This section of the chapter has investigated how the Aboriginal community views formal Western education and its relationship to self-determination. It has explored the spheres of influence that were held traditionally by Aboriginal women and how these spheres have become varied and supplanted in a modern day context. Having done so, it has explored how these spheres of influence are related to the educational quest of Aboriginal daughters.

The following section of the literature review will closely examine the Aboriginal mother and daughter relationship and its connection to Aboriginal mothers' support of their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education.

Aboriginal mother and daughter relationships

This section of the literature review will identify certain factors that exist in the relationship of Aboriginal mothers with their daughters. It will isolate the key behaviours that contribute to Aboriginal mothers being significant in the lives of their daughters as they pursue tertiary education.

The daughters in this study were involved in the educational system from the 1960s to the 1990s. They in part inherited a schooling system that was very different from the models that their mothers experienced, and it is probable that many of the mothers in the study were active in creating change in the formal Western education as it relates to Aboriginal people. In doing so, they have assisted their children to achieve a more equitably based education than what they had experienced.

These daughters have also achieved success through the educational process up and through to Year Ten (10) and as a consequence, have achieved many educational pre-requisites which contribute to them being able to pursue a tertiary education.

In regard to this, it is important to identify how the Aboriginal daughter/mother relationship is developed and strengthened, and how this supports the role of Aboriginal mothers as they assist their daughters to participate and achieve in tertiary education.

It is in the context of cultural and family support structures that a strong connection can be made between the relationship that exists between mothers,

daughters and other female kin in listening to each other and the affirmation of each other's self-worth. Keary (1994, p. 42) affirms the study of Joseph (1981) in maintaining that:

“The Aboriginal and Islander's mother-daughter relationship provides a safe space for mothers to pass onto their daughters' everyday knowledge which is fundamental to their survival”.

Not only then does the store of information needed for survival in the modern world by Aboriginal girls occur in the school setting but much information and encouragement is obtained in an informal setting with other Aboriginal women. It is in this transmission of culture and wisdom and store of knowledge regarding survival mechanisms encompassed under the umbrella of *women's business* that Aboriginal mothers pass on this critical information to their daughters. To clarify, the processes of adaptability and flexibility lie at the very basis of a group's ability to survive change and these strengths have been demonstrated by Aboriginal women as they have adapted their skills from a traditional to a contemporary context.

As the literature has shown, the Aboriginal community has stated the importance of a formal Western education for their children in order to achieve empowerment, self-determination and the knowledge and skills to be able to deal with mainstream society. Additionally it has also shown that Aboriginal women have traditionally held the responsibility as the main source of sustenance, for child-rearing and for the emotional management of the community. As Berndt (1963, p. 9) states: "women were the backbone of the family". Gould (1969, p.12) also maintains that in contemporary context "on the whole, women are the mainstay of the subsistence economy and Aboriginal women are often seen as the backbone of Aboriginal society".

The literature review has also established the importance of the Aboriginal mother/ daughter relationship and how the relationship is used to pass on critical information regarding economic survival and as such has shown the necessity for Aboriginal women to take on a proactive role in the education of their children.

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical framework

This chapter will explain the reasons for the chosen theoretical framework and define the importance of choosing a methodology appropriate to a cross-cultural context.

The theoretical framework used in this research will involve a number of research theories. These are grounded theory and feminist theory. These have been chosen as a way of representing, ordering and presenting the thoughts, thinking and experiences of those women involved in the research and to assist in providing the appropriate methodology. These social theories are listed and explained as follows:

Grounded theory

This theoretical process according to Sarantakos(1996) is not centred around the collecting of large amounts of data but attempts to organise the variety of thoughts and experiences that the researcher has collected during the analysis of the data. Sarantakos (1996) states that grounded theory has as its central principles the understandings that: the situation being studied is an autonomous unit with its own structure, boundaries and history; it should be identified as a case and it is guided by the interest of the researcher. Additionally, it seeks to interpret reality and validate the perception and experience of those being researched. Grounded theory uses everyday knowledge and action and as Sarantakos (1996, p. 269) maintains: "Primary experience is very significant for the development of grounded theory". Therefore created in the process of grounded theory development are concepts and categories that explain

experience, in this instance, the experience of Aboriginal mothers and that of their daughters in relation to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education.

Grounded theory and its relationship to this research seeks to explain the unit of study (this being Aboriginal mothers and their daughters') and the variables that have contributed to Aboriginal mothers being major contributors to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education.

Grounded theory has also contributed to an understanding of the reality and historical and educational experience of the Aboriginal mothers involved in this study and how this has impacted on Aboriginal mothers contributing to their daughters' involvement in tertiary education.

Feminist theory

The second theoretical model being used in this research is feminist theory. The minimal focus of feminist theory has been included in the research to support the female relationships involved in this study. This occurs not only between the Aboriginal mothers and their daughters but between the researcher and the participants. Lather (1991) and Reinharz (1992) cited in Sarantakos (1996) are of the opinion that feminist theory has amongst its many attributes, significant value in social research as it places emphasis on women's experiences which are considered a significant indicator of reality and it sees gender as the nucleus of women's perception and lives, shaping of consciousness, skills, institutions and distribution of power and privilege.

As Chapter 1, (pp.13, 14) explored, Aboriginal mothers and their daughters are often subject to a unique set of circumstances in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal society by the fact of their gender as female. Their gender often places constraints on their ability to access power and privilege, in this case through tertiary education. Feminist theory supports the study by suggesting that Aboriginal women's experience has its own reality and that by capitalising on the shared gender experience of the researcher and those women being researched a valid and more accurate account will be presented.

Feminist theory has assisted in isolating the unique factors that have contributed to Aboriginal mothers being successful in influencing their daughters' to participate and achieve in tertiary education through a trustful relationship being established between the researcher and the participants. It is this theoretical framework which has also assisted in identifying the methodology that will best support research in an intercultural context.

The Conceptual Framework

What follows is an examination of the environments that Aboriginal mothers create for their families and of the influential behaviours that they demonstrate within those environments. These behaviours and environments act as the support mechanisms for daughters to sequentially achieve their educational goals. It is presumed then that if these factors were not in place in the everyday functioning of the Aboriginal families that many Aboriginal daughters would not achieve the levels of success in education that they have.

The study by Watts (1981) which identifies the determinants of school success regarding the Aboriginal child has extreme significance in the light of this study. Watts outlines the variables that impact on the Aboriginal child achieving success at school and how all these behaviours and environments interconnect to achieve academic success.

The study of Watts (1981), regarding the identification of values and attitudes and beliefs and expectations as determinants of success, has contributed substantially to the development of a suitable and appropriate framework on which to attach the key understandings of this research.

A conceptual framework has been provided in order to provide a structure on which to pin the key notions of the study. These have been identified as the behavioural vehicles.

The essential behavioural vehicles demonstrated by Aboriginal mothers which influence their daughters have been identified under the following headings: **Values, Attitudes, Beliefs and Expectations** and the **Physical and Emotional Environments**.

These will be examined in closer detail.

Values, Attitudes, Belief and Expectations

Values are the judgments (criteria upon which choices are made), that a person may hold of what is valuable or important in life. An individual can hold values personally or those values can be shared within a group.

Attitudes are settled opinions or ways of thinking. According to Frankel (1980) cited in (Seefeldt, 1989, p. 243), "attitudes are also abstract and represent the worth or merit that we place on things." Attitudes and values elicit feelings and

emotions and imply an emotional liking or disliking. Attitudes and values cause us to think about something, feel about something and act upon it (Seefeldt, 1989). So, in the context of this study an examination of values and attitudes of Aboriginal mothers toward education and the ways in which they transmit those values and attitudes will be carried out. Values and attitudes are learned behaviour and if individuals do not learn about them from their parents they will learn about them from alternative significant others or sometimes unfortunately not at all (Seefeldt, 1989).

This statement is consistent with the research of Keary (1994) who has described the behaviours of Aboriginal mothers and other female kin who listen to each other and subsequently affirm each other's self - worth. In the process of doing so they pass on the values and expectations that they hold for each other.

Beliefs are the statements or acceptance of a notion as conveying the truth. Beliefs therefore, are the expression of an individual or group's notions regarding what is the truth.

Expectations are strong hopes or beliefs that something will happen or that you will get something that you want. Expectations in different cultures may be expressed in different ways. Aboriginal mother's expectations of their daughters' may not be all that different compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts in that the differences may be based around cultural orientation i.e. traditional as compared to urban, socio-economic status, educational status and the degree of cultural identity that one aspires to.

It is easy to stereotype according to these classifications. However, it is unlikely that a rule of thumb can be applied to Aboriginal mothers just as it cannot be applied to non- Aboriginal mothers. It is the life experiences especially as applied to the historical context in which they are set that have perhaps laid the ground rules for Aboriginal mothers and the expectations that they hold for their daughters. The synthesis of this may be that Aboriginal mothers want something better for their daughters than what they experienced and the motives that drive their ability to influence their daughters are primarily drawn from that life experience.

Another aspect associated with the notion of maternal expectations is that of Aboriginal mothers' capacity to inspire confidence in their daughters. This is an important concept in the Western educational paradigm which draws its understanding from the study of educational psychology. There is little reason to believe that this notion cannot be applied to an Aboriginal context also. This maternal expectation may be expressed as 'Self-Efficacy' and the 'Halo' effect (Woolfolk, 1990, p. 306, p. 541). In this study, this phenomenon may be explained by the Aboriginal mother's belief and expectation of her daughter's ability and already attained academic pre-requisites that will lead her to achieve the expected outcome of success in education at a tertiary level. It may also indicate that, some Aboriginal mothers expect their daughters to obtain higher levels of academic achievement, given the existing support structures in place for Aboriginal tertiary students. These are identified as the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (A.T.A.S), Abstudy and other educational incentive schemes, none of which were in place in the educational era of these mothers.

Emotional Environment

The following information describes the nature of the emotional and physical environments that Aboriginal mothers create. These are extremely important to daughters as they pursue tertiary education due to the fact that they contribute to the total support structure that Aboriginal mothers provide for their daughters.

The description of "*emotional*" could be described as the part of a person's character that consists of their feelings as opposed to their thoughts ... *the split between reason and emotion* (Oxford Dictionary, 1995).

An emotion is a feeling such as happiness, love, anger, hatred, which can be caused by the situation that you are in or the people that you are with.

Emotional support in the context of this study is described as the behaviours that mothers elicit towards their daughters which contribute to the maintenance of their daughter's emotional well-being. This occurs at a level that allows them to continue to adapt to their emotional and physical environments and hence sustain a level of emotional continuity. These may be demonstrated by physical affection for example; (1) hugs, kisses, smiling and touching, (2) verbal positives such as the 'praising up' of achievements and already attained goals to their daughters and other members of the kinship group, (3) verbal guidance, such as, the identification of the benefits of continuing on in education and the identification of disadvantages of academic withdrawal, (4) the validation of feelings and willingness to be a '*bouncing board*', for their daughters' emotions and (5) verbal negatives such as the perceived needs of the mothers to 'tune them in' to remind them to remain focused on their goal. This latter factor may

be classed as a form of spoken adult / child discipline but with the discipline taking place in an atmosphere of unconditional love and void of any punitive action such as '*shaming*' in a public setting for mistakes.

It is interesting to note here that one of the key features of Aboriginal child-rearing according to Kearins (1974) is the practice of allowing children to be autonomous decision-makers. This characteristic appears to be fostered in Aboriginal children from an early age. The belief imbedded in this practice is possibly the notion of the cause/effect principle in that, for every action there is a reaction and that the individual will learn and develop their problem-solving skills from risk-taking and making independent decisions.

Physical Environment

The physical environment can be described as and can include the structure that one shelters in or it may include the resources of the home. Physical is concerned with matter, or material. Environment is the conditions or circumstances of living (Oxford Dictionary, 1995).

In terms of this study the physical environment includes the services that are provided within the physical environment. These may be listed as the washing, cooking, shopping, the cleaning and the ironing, labour and time involved with providing such services, the provision of money for living, to purchase consumables and non-consumables and the payment of expenses such as bills. Aboriginal mothers can obtain their financial support from a number of sources. These include their employment, their partner's employment, social security benefits and borrowing from other kin members who may be in a financially sound situation to give or lend money.

Aboriginal mothers in this regard are seen as resource persons who create and organise the living environment. They do this by obtaining consumable and non-consumable items, carrying out household maintenance procedures such as the paying of bills for essential services and by providing their labour to ensure that the household is maintained at a functional level. In this way the individuals attached to a particular household can carry out their daily lives assured that their basic needs will be met and that there is an established reference and nurturing point for the family members.

These are all part of the whole perspective in terms of what the household provides for the individuals contained within and attached to that particular family.

The final aspect of the physical environment involves proximity or (closeness) behaviours such as listening and looking. These apply to the availability and approachability of Aboriginal mothers. These behaviours all relate to Aboriginal mothers' accessibility to their daughters and how Aboriginal mothers and daughters utilise communication systems to effect or simulate proximity to each other.

Daughters may be able to access their mothers' assistance, not only physically through living in close vicinity to their mothers but by using available telecommunications such as the telephone, facsimile, email and standard postal and transport systems. They use these to access support and advice, or to make regular contact in order to maintain the relationship with their mothers.

The concept of the physical and emotional environments in Aboriginal families encompasses the notion of Aboriginal mothers as fulfilling traditional and contemporary roles as major providers of sustenance and emotional management and decision makers in matters concerning children's welfare.

They also have taken on and absorbed additional skills as maintenance persons and service deliverers in and out of the home as they continue to adapt to societal and technological change.

This chapter has investigated the theoretical framework used in this study as supportive of and appropriate to a cross cultural research context. It has explained how grounded and feminist theories are suitable for developing an understanding of the perceptions and realities of the Aboriginal women involved in the study. The conceptual framework has provided a structure on which to attach the key notions of the study.

The following chapter will outline the methodology that was employed in order to most effectively research the thesis and will give a specific account of how the research was conducted.

CHAPTER 4

Methodology

This chapter will outline in detail the research methodology that was employed to most appropriately investigate the hypothesis. It will explain the necessity for culturally appropriate research methodology to be used when researching in an intercultural context and explain how this methodology was implemented.

Qualitative ethnographic methodology has been used to investigate the hypothesis of - "Aboriginal mothers as major contributor to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education".

The parameters of this research include both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal contexts, aspects of mainstream society including Western-based formal education and the disciplines of education and anthropology.

As this research has been identified as qualitative and ethnographic its overall features are described as follows:

Qualitative methodology according to Sarantakos (1996, p.45) demonstrates the following characteristics:

"It assumes that the social world is always a human creation and tries to capture reality as it is. It studies a small number of respondents.

It attempts to present the information gathered verbally, in a detailed and complete form not in numbers or formulas. It uses no quantitative measures or variables. It aims to understand people, not to measure them.

It employs research procedures that produce descriptive data, presenting in the respondents' own words their views and experiences."

These methodological characteristics can therefore provide the criteria by which the research can be conducted.

Appropriate methodology is critical when undertaking intercultural research as at times it is necessary for the researcher to be aware of his/her cultural frame of reference for effective and legitimate data to be obtained. As the researcher is drawn from an Anglo/Celtic/European background it is important to recognise that the perceptions and experiences of the Aboriginal women in this study must be presented in a way that presents their reality. In support of this notion, Myrdal (1973, p.90) in research on cultural bias and appropriate research methodology, maintains that:

" When theories and concepts designed to fit the special conditions of the western world and thus containing the implicit assumptions about social reality by which this fitting was accomplished...where they do not fit, the consequences are serious".

In the past, models of research sometimes relied heavily on the concept of ethnocentrism which implied that, and relied on, cultures being placed on a deficit scale in relation to western based culture. Ethnocentrism as it has been described in this research is " the habit or tendency to judge or interpret other cultures according to the criteria of one's own culture" (Seymour - Smith, 1993, p.96).

Marxist theory identified the use of ethnocentric bias as supportive of imperialistic expansion and as a result contemporary researchers recognised that the western perspective of research was often not relevant to research in

other cultural contexts. (Triandis, 1983). Further to this Triandis(1983, p. 84) expresses that:

“We are programmed by our culture, through a lifetime of experiences, rewards and punishments for certain behaviours, to react to others actions in certain ways”.

Consequently, the methodology used here is based upon the understanding that for valid data to be obtained the researcher needs to employ alternative research processes which identify and capitalise upon patterns of behaviour and ways of inter-relating based upon a particular Aboriginal worldview.

Situations involving academic research in indigenous communities have in the last twenty years been subject to criticism from Aboriginal community advocates such as the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (1982) who have raised concerns about the ethics and validity of academic research. They have stated the fact that there are immediate payoffs for the researcher in gaining an academic grading however for the participants they have often been 'used and abused' with the communities not gaining from the research (Brennan, 1980; Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, 1982). In addition to this, the true perspective of a situation or event has often not been obtained because the indigenous ways of negotiation and consultation with community members at all levels and stages of the research have not been carried out. This failure to apply the processes of negotiation and consultation has in many cases further perpetuated the myths and stereotypes about indigenous communities by the mainstream society. Other researchers have also noted that the vested interests of various community groups are often not fully considered in research process (Bengston, Grigsby, Corry and Hruby, 1977).

The research guidelines as recommended by the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (Guidelines into research into Aboriginal matters, 1982) were adhered to as far as possible in this research. These are listed as follows:

- (1) The research has been conducted for and with the guidance of Aboriginal people.
- (2) The research has generated information to be implemented into Aboriginal programs.
- (3) The research was non- invasive and conducted within culturally intelligible and acceptable frames of reference.
- (4) The research was approved by the Aboriginal community, with guidance and liaisons provided by two Aboriginal women drawn from major Aboriginal organisations who acted as mentors to the researcher.
- (5) The results of the research will be used to benefit Aboriginal people in the short and long term.
- (6) The publication and distribution of any cultural information within the document has been authorised, edited and validated by Aboriginal people.

In effect, the overriding principles in regard to good research must be that: it will contribute to the knowledge base about the Aboriginal community, assist in the maintenance and development of that community, be written in a way that is readily interpreted, usable and translatable by the Aboriginal community and for Aboriginal communities to take ownership of the research (Brennan, 1980).

This research has been also influenced to a degree by the researchers' and participants' exposure to cultures other than the dominant culture they were reared in. Aboriginal daughters, as this research has shown, have been required to interact effectively in a western educational setting as well as a variety of Aboriginal social contexts. These daughters were also obliged to

function in either traditional or urban Aboriginal society or mainstream, or all, in order to achieve their academic goals and so in essence they have all effectively crossed cultures. Their mothers on the other hand have been reared in more traditional Aboriginal contexts dealing only on the fringe of formal Western education as in many cases a western education was almost unattainable due to the impact of the government policy of the day. Similarly, the researcher has been raised in a relatively mainstream environment but has had significant exposure to alternative cultures other than an Anglo/Celtic/ European tradition from early childhood to middle adulthood.

It may be possible to assume that the ability to interact with other cultures and identify the cultural norms during childhood provides the individual with the capacity to cross- cultures effectively at a later stage in their working and personal lives.

The Interview

As stated in the introduction, much of the anecdotal information in this study has been based on ethnographic observations gathered over a two and a half - year period by the researcher. This information has been used as reinforcement in order to support primary interview data.

A definition of ethnographic research is included as follows. Sarantakos (1993, p.226) cites Zaharlik (1990) in listing the characteristics of ethnographic research as being; (1) marked by the long established relationship of the researcher and the respondent, i.e. *the researcher had spent a total of three years interacting in a variety of social environments with the research participants*, (2) the researcher a learner, i.e. *the researcher forwarded a desire to learn about Aboriginal culture*, (3) first-

hand information, i.e. *the researcher gained knowledge of Aboriginal issues from direct experience*, 4) long term observation, i.e. *ethnographic observations were made over a two and a half year period*, (5) participant observation, i.e. *the researcher gathered anecdotal information regarding the participants over a two and a half year period*, (6) the ethnographer as a research instrument, i.e. *the researcher became the tool of research process*, (7) naturalistic observations, i.e. *observations of participants were conducted in normal everyday situations, such as, in daily discussions at work, the shops and at community meetings*, (8) eclectic approach, i.e. *the researcher took examples of behaviours from a variety of situations, such as, at various social and educational settings both formal and informal* (9) interactive approach, i.e. *the researcher recorded according to both the perspective of the participant and the researcher*, (10) holistic approach, i.e. *the researcher took into account the larger picture in recording of behaviours, situations or events*, (11) humanistic perspective, i.e. *the researcher based observation on a model of human needs* and (12) a cross-cultural frame of reference, i.e. *the researcher was aware that recording behaviours, events and situations could possibly be interpreted quite differently and therefore may have needed additional clarification.*

The ethnographic records gathered in the period 1995-1997 have impacted significantly on the study by providing substantial background information regarding aspects of the current study.

These previous ethnographic records have provided specific anecdotal evidence concerning community information, general patterns of social behaviour, varying situations existent in the Aboriginal community and daily

events. These have been observed in both formal and informal social and academic settings.

The other data collection tool that has been used is that of the interview. The utilisation of the interview in this research process is appropriate because as Sarantakos (1996, pp. 182, 183) states:

"It has the purpose of studying cultures and their manifestations on people. It aims to discover cultural meaning as conceptualised by individuals, search for cultural symbols and in general to explain the meaning of the culture for other people".

The aim of the interview in this study was to obtain the necessary data in a manner that was as natural and flowing as possible and in a way that replicated a natural conversation. An unstructured interview approach was chosen for its open-ness, qualitative nature and interviewee guided mode. Reinharz (1992) quoted by Sarantakos (1996, p.177) maintains that unstructured interviewing technique is particularly suited to female researchers as "it draws on the skills in the traditional female role". In addition, she claims that "this method is very useful when conducted by a woman; to be understood it maybe necessary for her to be interviewed by a woman". Reinharz (1992) quoted by Sarantakos (1996, p.197) asserts that: "interviewing allows women to speak in their own words, and not the words of the researcher ... and encourages the sense of connectedness".

There are many cultural issues to consider when conducting interviews. Firstly, the manner in which the interviews are conducted are influenced by the type of language used by the researcher. Language in this context includes the tone and inflection of the voice and the use of Aboriginal English as a shared

communication form. Additionally, language in the interview structure is an important consideration. As a consequence of carrying out research in an intercultural context, it is important that the researcher (a) uses simple and well-stated uncomplicated language to avoid confusion, i.e. *wording of questions that may be complicated or verbose (these should be reworded in the advent of misunderstanding)*, and (b) reduces possible cultural discomfort questions, i.e. *cultural questions that the participants may not be free to speak about*.

The unstructured interview has its advantage in allowing the researcher to take a back seat approach and in this context capitalise on the Aboriginal person's strength in oral recitation and storytelling. The term "*storylike*" has been used here to describe the narrative account of past events in the lives of the Aboriginal mothers and daughters in this study.

In choosing the interview process the researcher has explored the proposed questions whilst encouraging the participants to respond in an informal and story-like manner. The design of the research study was intended to be interactive between the researcher and the individuals encompassed within the research. This procedure of allowing the participant to transmit information through the story-telling process appears to be supported by other Aboriginal researchers. In a paper delivered to 'The First National Black Researchers' Workshop' (1980) Brennan stated that:

"There is already a body of knowledge that we can draw on and which we can readily communicate to other Aboriginals and be verified by them. Of course, a lot of this knowledge is not recorded on paper. Aboriginals have other ways of storing information which is largely systemised in an oral tradition. I think there is a need for more research required in this area alone, that is on the techniques

used to collect and interpret 'facts' as part of the business of systematic thinking".

This employment of the interview as a research instrument has assisted the research process by providing the respondents with the opportunity to remain in control, to resist uncomfortable questioning in the interview, to remain within their comfort zone and to take ownership of their knowledge.

In the case of the traditional women in this study an intermediary whom they know well has been used to act as an interpreter, if necessary to alleviate the possibility of misinterpretation of the questions and to assist in the women feeling more comfortable with the interview process. This consideration proved to be unnecessary for interpretive purposes except in one instance where one traditional Aboriginal mother was a little shy and appeared to find support by the presence of another Aboriginal women in the interview situation. All daughters have participated in the interview process first and both mothers and daughters in the research were requested to refrain from discussing the research until all interviews were completed.

The other major consideration in the interview situation is that of questioning. As the respondents comfort was essential to the success of each interview, embedded in the interview were the same but often reworded, open ended questions which sometimes occurred at different stages of the interview. These were directed to the respondents at the most appropriate stages of the interview, so much of this process has relied on the judgement of the researcher as to assess the correct time to question, interject and conclude.

In these interviews the researcher has needed to be sensitive to oral messages and the body language of the respondents. These messages, may indicate a degree of discomfort regarding aspects of the questioning. Only in one interview (with a traditional Aboriginal mother) did there appear to be any apprehension regarding the questioning and clarification was provided by another Aboriginal woman present who acted as a cultural interpreter. This may have been because of the nature of the question or the interview situation. Generally, Aboriginal people are not encouraged to use questioning and in fact, they are trained not to ask too many questions (Harris, 1990).

In an intercultural context it is paramount that culturally appropriate questioning is used to support the research. This includes questioning using a vocabulary that the respondent is familiar with such as Aboriginal English. It is equally important to respect the status, authority and cultural practices of the respondents, regarding the rights and protocols in the dissemination of culturally specific knowledge possessed by the respondents, especially when this is being transmitted to another person from another cultural context – in this case the researcher. It is noteworthy to include here the researcher's awareness of differences in cultural understandings, however, this is possibly balanced by the researcher's close rapport in having worked and socialised in an intercultural context over a number of years. Whilst this relationship is important, it is equally important to realise that the women in this study do not fit into an either/or category and that there will be many differences in the ways they express their diversity as Aboriginal people.

In the case of respondents who were in an age bracket 10 years and above the researcher, the respondent was accorded the respect as being an elder of her community. In many cases the older person being interviewed was from a more

traditional background and because of this the structure of the questioning was presented differently and an intermediary person was present to assist in the interpretive gathering process. The researcher has used this questioning time to allow the respondents to initiate concerns that they may have regarding any aspect of the research.

In conclusion, this chapter has sought to provide an understanding of the importance of choosing the correct methodology when undertaking research in an intercultural context. It has shown that appropriate methodology should be chosen to support the particular situation that is being researched and that the research tools employed need to be matched to capitalise on the Aboriginal worldview and experience. The worldview of Aboriginal people who are participating in research may dictate the ways and means of *being* and *doing* for both members of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community involved in intercultural research. The chapter has shown the necessity of ensuring that interviews of an intercultural nature are conducted by researchers of the same sex when there may be issues of cultural sensitivity to consider. Furthermore, it is important to question appropriately, be sensitive to discomfort on the part of the respondents, ensure that the language being used is appropriate to the cultural context and participants language mode, use an interpreter if necessary with traditional Aboriginal persons, and allow the interview to take a 'storylike' approach to the telling of events and situations.

CHAPTER 5

Procedures

This chapter of the study describes how the research process was implemented and of the varying experiences that occurred within the research process.

However, before continuing it is important to define the data gathering process as it relates to this research, as it is this process that has dictated the research procedure. The process of data collection in the case of qualitative research is distinctively differently from quantitative research. In qualitative research the processes of data collection is:

“A dynamic process of gathering, thinking, evaluating, analysing, modifying, expanding, gathering further, thinking again and so on ...

In addition, data collection in qualitative research is geared towards natural situations, everyday life worlds, interaction and interpretation, and for that reason the researcher has to organise this element of investigation to meet these methodological requirements" (Sarantakos, 1996, p. 279).

The data collection process used here has been designed to meet the criteria of ethnographic research and the sequential list of events involved in the data collection process are described as follows.

Since the initial inception of this study there were Aboriginal women who shared their life stories on an informal and incidental basis. Their experiences have been documented using ethnographic records over a two and a half - year period and these have provided substantial evidence that is imbedded in the presentation of this thesis.

In September of 1996 expressions of interest were articulated informally throughout the local Hedland Aboriginal communities at government and educational gatherings. Information about the research was spread by word of mouth through the Aboriginal grapevine about this *'Waalybata' / Gurriya* woman wanting to listen to stories about Aboriginal mothers and their daughters. The interest, enthusiasm, encouragement and support of these Aboriginal women was over-whelming.

Female members of the Aboriginal community were openly invited to express their interest to participate in the research project with the understanding that suitable persons would be short-listed by the researcher and the mentors. The mentors were asked to consider appropriate Aboriginal women who could possibly participate in the project and in all, approximately twenty women were approached by the researcher and the mentors.

It is not clear how the message was spread to other women outside the approached individuals, nor how the project was articulated to other Aboriginal women, and so the process of recruitment was voluntarily based with mentors assisting in the short-listing on the basis of differences in the daughters' qualifications. In addition to this it may be possible to speculate that the *'wonders of the Aboriginal grapevine'* may have been at work in order for the project information to be relayed to the Aboriginal community over a relatively short one month period. Aboriginal mothers whose daughters had pursued tertiary studies at either Technical and Further Education (T.A.F.E.) colleges or university were identified within the first two months of the project's commencement. In all, four paired groups were selected. They were matched

by biological relationship as mother and daughter and all eight women accepted the invitation to participate with keen interest. There may be some that would question the subject limit of four paired mothers and daughters however, this limitation was due to the nature of the research that was subject to time restraints and the difficulties of research in an intercultural context.

The next stage of the research was to inform the participants of all processes and procedures of the research. This was done in a shared mother/daughter session except for one instance where the Aboriginal mother was on a remote Aboriginal community. On this occasion she relied on her daughter to convey the information when the daughter visited her next and this was finally done before the commencement of the mother's interview. This was done on a verbal basis and written information was also provided for those who wanted written verification. The researcher also explained that the research outcomes contributed toward the gaining of an academic qualification but also that the Aboriginal community would gain from the information gathered as it would hopefully feed directly into Aboriginal programs. The researcher discussed the appropriateness of the research to the Aboriginal community with the mentors during the planning stage. The detailed planning at this initial stage of the project has contributed to the project being well received and supported by the Aboriginal community.

The next stage of the process was to arrange appropriate times and locations for the interviews. The very nature of Aboriginal time frame, in that events occur when the time is felt to be right or convenient, meant that data collection was delayed by two months due to the need for participants to respond to family demands. The change in interview time due to these reasons occurred in all of the eight interview appointments.

The researcher carried out all eight interviews with each interview only demanding one hour of the respondent's time in total. An important aspect of this preliminary interview process was to explain to participants that there were no right or wrong answers – just the necessity to state the experience, behaviour or event as it had occurred. It was anticipated by, the researcher and the mentors of the study, that if there were indications that the respondents were experiencing discomfort then the interviews would cease and an alternate time will be arranged however this situation did not eventuate.

The criteria for the location of the interviews was based on:

- (1) A suitable and quiet location of the participant's choice.
- (2) A suitable time with consideration made as to the participant's individual restraints.

In most cases interviews were conducted at the participant's home.

The only variation to this was one interview conducted at the researcher's place of employment.

At the commencement of the interview the researcher and participant spoke for approximately five to ten minutes catching up on each other's news about happenings within the local Aboriginal community before the researcher initiated the interview. This was done to relax both the researcher and the participants.

The interview process was explained and initiated when the participants were ready. This was done by, asking the participant "Would you like to start the interview now?" Participants were told at this time that they would be guided

throughout the interview process with questions and these questions would be asked at the most appropriate stages of the interview. The interview was commenced. Participants verbally confirmed that they had a general understanding of the research questions and were asked to structure their responses with the topic in mind. Participants were also reassured the researcher or interpreter would intervene to gain further clarification regarding an interesting response or interpretive difficulty.

The interview was conducted by the researcher and was recorded using a small, compact tape recorder to reduce obtrusiveness in the interview situation. This was placed to the side and equal distance between the interviewer and the interviewee. The aim of the interview was to obtain the necessary data in a manner that was as natural and flowing as possible and in a way that replicated a natural conversation.

The researcher in preparing for the interview situation had prepared two separate sheets of interview questions in the advent that dialogue did not flow; however, these were not utilised. Interviews were concluded by either the researcher or the participant giving a non-verbal message to cease the interview.

This chapter has sought to explain the ways in which the research procedure was conducted which led to favourable outcomes of eight completed interviews. It has also sought to address the proposed difficulties in researching in an intercultural context and has proposed relevant, alternative strategies and methods to overcome these problems.

CHAPTER 6

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

This chapter will define the processes by which the data was analysed and interpreted. It will examine the ways in which the interviews were transcribed and labelled in order to facilitate easy referral.

Just as other forms of research require specific and suitable forms of data analysis, the same applies to qualitative research in the interview situation.

Lamnek (1989) cited in Sarantakos (1996, pp. 305, 306) describes a process whereby the researcher can successfully interpret data and provide some degree of structure in what appears to be an otherwise somewhat chaotic array of data. This process includes the:

- (1) Transcription
- (2) Individual analysis
- (3) Generalisation
- (4) Control

At the completion of the data gathering process the initial stage required that each audio - taped interview be converted to a transcript and original audio - tapes were erased after the transcription process was completed to comply with ethics standards.

The interviews were transcribed in total and no attempt was made to alter any part of the dialogue except where identification of the respondent may have been possible. Aboriginal English has been employed as part of this research as a language that is rich and expressive but very often quite semantically

different than that of Australian Standard English. Considering these factors the researcher has interpreted responses based upon extensive and experiential knowledge gained from living and working in an Aboriginal context. Of course, the interpretation of the responses will never be absolutely definitive. However, they can approximate the understanding of what has been implied in the interview situation. Interpretation of responses was also clarified with the assistance of the research mentors. The transcriptions have been presented to clearly reflect the process of each interview and each interview has been labelled and identified as a 'case study'. A case study is described by Seymour-Smith (1993) as: "a detailed record of the experience of an individual or a series of events occurring within a given framework". The case study is employed within this research as an appropriate format for capturing the experiences of Aboriginal mothers in relation to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education. The eight case studies examine four Aboriginal mothers' experiences in assisting their daughters to participate and achieve in tertiary education and the experiences and perceptions of their daughters of their mothers' contribution to their participation and achievement in tertiary education. The case studies are presented with the mother's interview first followed by the daughter's interview. There is no doubt that the case study method of data collection and data presentation has limitations especially given the restricted sample group of eight participants. However, as all four daughters in the study have achieved success in tertiary education, it has been possible using the case study method and associated oral storytelling technique (as mentioned previously), to track the patterns and similarities in the Aboriginal mothers' behaviours, which have assisted their daughters to participate and achieve in tertiary education.

Some of the interviews have shown that Aboriginal women have preferred to present their experience through a monologue with minimal interference or questioning from the researcher. In these instances the transcripts have been labelled under 'sections' in order to facilitate easy reference. In other cases an unstructured interview process has been adhered to, whilst others are a combination of the two methods.

The analyses of the data has been categorised initially according to the collective values, attitudes, beliefs and expectations of Aboriginal mothers and also that of their daughters. The interview responses of both the mothers and the daughters were categorised and documented as being a value, belief, expectation or attitude and in some cases a combination of one or more of these. These have been tabled (see Appendices 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c) in parallel columns. Responses of the mothers and the daughters are not presented according to a one to one correspondence in the presentation table.

This presentation has been done in order to provide a visual reference on which to attach the vehicles of influence identified in the data analysis. This has assisted in the formulation of a suitable descriptive reference, similar to the structure employed by Watts (1981) in her study on "The determinants of success for child at school." The next step in this process was to identify Aboriginal mothers' responses against similar responses of the daughters. This was done using an informal tally system. Using this technique, patterns emerged and generalisations were formulated regarding significant behaviours of Aboriginal mothers and other dominant variables that contributed to Aboriginal daughters' achievement and participation in tertiary education. The factors that were identified in the analysis of the data as significant behaviours are listed as follows:

(1) Pride, (2) Optimism, (3) Goal Orientation and Discipline, (4) Devotion and Communication, (5) Role - Modelling, (6) Autonomy in Decision Making and (7) Strength and Tenacity.

A flow chart of these significant behaviours is shown on the following page, (see Figure1, p.58). The composite findings of the research are listed in Appendices 1C, (p. 122); 2C, (p. 135); 3C, (p.146); 4C, (p.163). As such, it is recommended that the reader refer to these appendices before continuing on to the next chapter.

This chapter has described the data - gathering process in relation to an intercultural context. This has involved a blend of knowledge from the Aboriginal worldview and research requirements of the academic community. It has explained the considerations from the participant's perspective and the establishment of a rapport that facilitates the effective transmission of information.

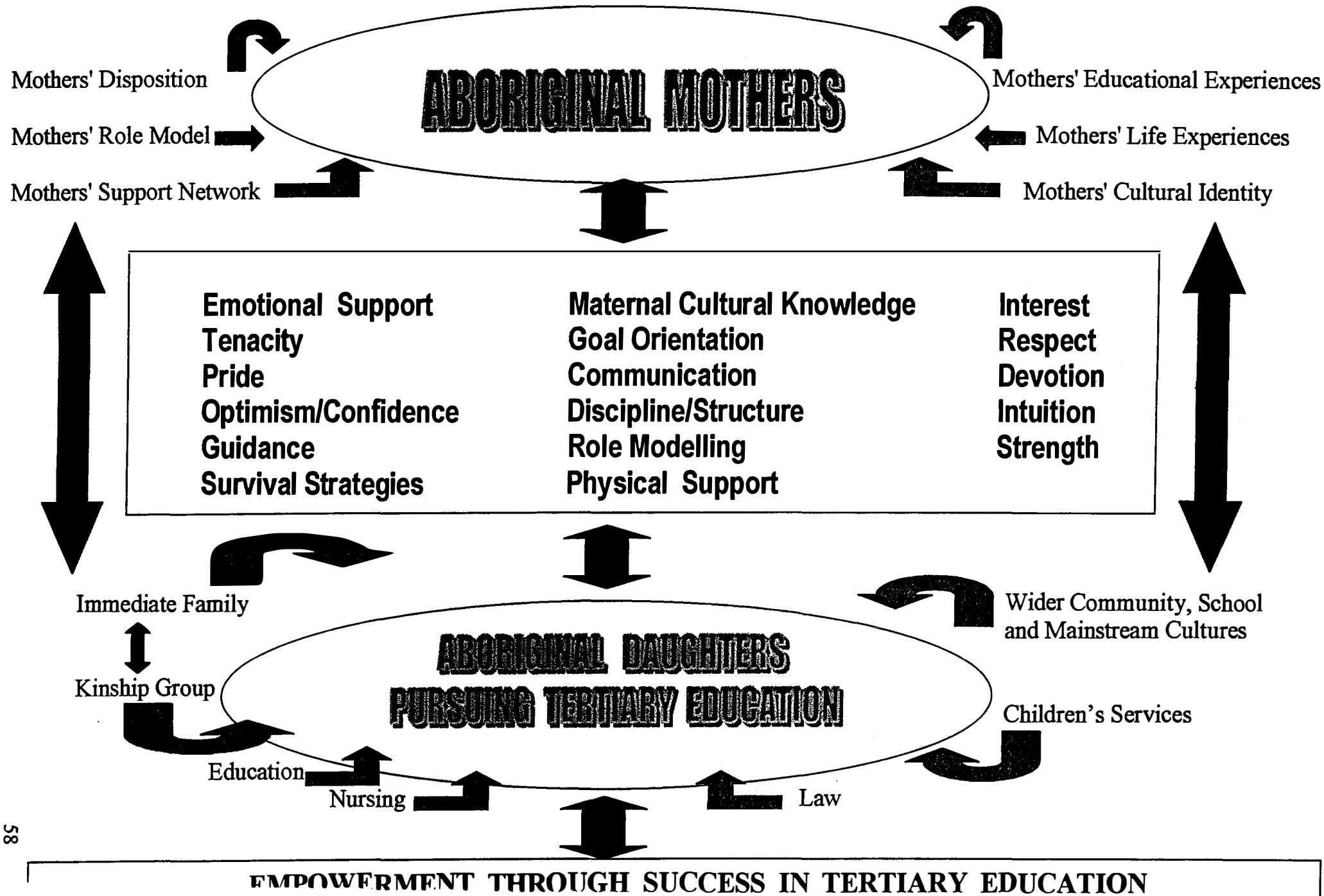


Figure 1.

CHAPTER 7

Research Findings and Discussion

This chapter will present a detailed analysis of the key findings of the research and provide a discussion regarding these and the additional findings of the study.

In the implementation of this research and at the conclusion of the data collection process the most tentative questions that arose in the mind of the researcher were:

Had the research dealt effectively with the essence of how Aboriginal mothers had contributed to the lives of their daughters which significantly influenced them to pursue tertiary studies?

Had the research captured the truth involving the salient characteristics of Aboriginal mothers, in their relation to Aboriginal child – rearing practices, which advanced significantly their daughters quest for tertiary education?

Aboriginal mothers it seems, and as the review of the literature has already suggested are a strong, enduring and pivotal force that is found throughout the structure of Aboriginal society. Their influence is experienced at various reference points in the Aboriginal community such as Aboriginal organisations as well as mainstream government organisations that have an interest in Aboriginal health, welfare, education or business enterprises. The daughters in this study were involved in the educational system from the 1960s to the 1990s. They in part inherited a schooling system that was very different from the models that their mothers experienced, and it is probable that many of the

mothers in the study were active in creating change in the formal Western education as it relates to Aboriginal people (Daughter 4, Case Study 7, 12.A).

In doing so, they have assisted their children to achieve a more equitably based education than what they had experienced. What became apparent in the analysis of data was the key and influential role that functional Aboriginal mothers play in their daughters' lives. These specific behaviours displayed by those Aboriginal mothers present themselves both covertly and overtly and are demonstrated in the physical and emotional environments that Aboriginal mothers create for their daughters. The identification of these physical and emotional environments was critical to the study as the environments provided the forum in which the significant behaviours were demonstrated (see Appendices 1.D. (p.123); 2.D. (p.136); 3.D. (p.147); 4.D. (p.164) These will be explained as follows:

The Physical Environment

Aboriginal mothers contribute to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education through the creation of a functional physical environment. This is outlined as follows:

This environment includes the provision of services such as; cleaning, cooking, washing; security of the structure of the home; supplementation of finances by parents through the paying of bills; inviting daughters to share meals and babysitting of daughter's children so that daughters could study or relax. Mothers were also assertive by ensuring that others knew that their daughters needed to study and provided time and the environment for them to do so. Aboriginal mothers articulated the importance of a sound education and all provided the option for their daughters to attend schooling in a capital city as they felt that this would enhance their life and educational prospects. Mothers

were also active in physically nurturing their daughters and these daughters commented that they were '*looked after*' by their mothers.

The physical environment could then be described as the reference point for daughters as it is through this environment that the majority of support structures were provided for daughters.

The research leaves no doubt that Aboriginal mothers are strongly influential in their family structures. Aboriginal daughters who have gained success in pursuing tertiary education through the gaining of a diploma or degree, as well as Aboriginal daughters involved in other life pursuits have benefited by the presence, resourcefulness and demonstrated physical and support provided by their mothers. This factor has been clearly recognised by the daughters in this study who have clearly articulated the role that their mothers played by ensuring that they went to school regularly, and that they were provided with the necessary physical resources for school such as paper, pens and pencils (Daughter 4, Case Study B).

The Emotional Environment

The emotional environment that Aboriginal mothers provide for their daughters was marked by a number of features. These are outlined as follows.

Daughters perceived their mothers as providing a happy home. Imbedded in this was a closeness to immediate and extended family and within this closeness, help and encouragement was provided by older brothers and sisters as well as other members of the family. Role-modelling provided by Aboriginal mothers and sisters encouraged all daughters to continue to strive for their goals. Mothers emotionally supported their daughters through the praising of achievements and continually verbalised their encouragement for daughters to

continue on with their studies. Strong encouragement was often carried out over the phone with many problems often being resolved in this manner.

Daughters articulated that they had an absolute knowingness that they would be looked after. An unconditional acceptance of each other appears to underpin this confidence that Aboriginal daughters speak of in regard to being looked after. Aboriginal mothers were perceived by their daughters to be a primary reference point in their family structures and emotional managers. This emotional management created a relationship whereby daughters turned to their mothers for emotional support by asking advice, or by their mothers acting as 'bouncing boards' and 'emotional equalisers' to ensure their daughters' psychological health. Aboriginal mothers, in turn carefully monitored their daughters' emotions to ensure a state of relative emotional equilibrium. In this case, emotional equilibrium is important to Aboriginal daughters who are tertiary students as they progress towards their educational goals. Emotional highs and lows and extreme frustration may be experienced in times of academic stress. Contributing factors may be academic demands such as assignment deadlines, tests and examinations, as well as the pressures of living away from the kinship group and home or coping with family responsibilities (ethnographic notes, 1996). It is possible that the Aboriginal mothers' role in emotional management acted as a stress release mechanism for their daughters, alleviating tension by talking frustrations through, listening to problems and developing coping strategies together. This emotional management as the review of the literature elaborated upon, identified this role that Aboriginal mothers displayed in a traditional context and this role of emotional management has shown itself to be equally important in a contemporary context.

This study has found that it is the physical and emotional environment which provide the context through which Aboriginal mothers operate. It is in these environments that the specific behaviours of Aboriginal mothers are demonstrated and which form the basis of this thesis.

All four daughters in this study acknowledged their mothers as the major contributor to their participation and achievement in tertiary education. Comments that were noted included:

"Definitely, I couldn't cope without her" (Daughter 1, Appendix 1b, 18.A).

"Without my mother's support I don't think that I would have got through the course" (Daughter 2, Case Study.4, 1.A).

"I really think it was her encouragement and support that got me through all the rough patches you know and through to graduating" (Daughter 3, Case Study 6, 4.A).

"I couldn't have achieved everything I have without her support especially" (Daughter 4, Case Study 8, 29.A).

The following behaviours have been identified as major influences on Aboriginal daughters' success and participation in tertiary education. These behaviours have been mentioned in relation to the physical and emotional environment in which they occur, and will be investigated further in the following section.

The significant behaviours that Aboriginal mothers demonstrated in both the physical and emotional environments of their daughters were shown to be; **Pride, Optimism, Goal Orientation and Discipline, Devotion and**

Communication, Role-modelling, Autonomy in decision making, Strength and Tenacity. Other behaviours have been included on the flow chart (see Fig.1), as these were mentioned by individual participants of the study. These behaviours were not seen to be collective opinions of the total sample group but these additional behaviours will be discussed briefly due to their impact on the study. The significant behaviours are outlined in relation to the contexts in which they appear. The presentation of findings to follow will include quotes from the interview transcripts. These will be presented in italics.

Pride

Pride was a significant behaviour that was demonstrated by mothers in this study. Pride, as a behavior and as it is presented in this study describes the way in which both mothers and daughters conduct themselves in their daily activities, their sense of self worth and their satisfaction in their achievements. In the context of this study pride has been demonstrated from the perspective of the mothers and that of the daughters with both sharing similarities in expression.

Aboriginal mothers indicated their praise of their daughter's aspirations and achievements.

" Yeah, I'm proud of her...but this one she's my baby, so in that way I'm very proud" (Mother 1,Appendix 1, 1.A).

" She was so proud of herself and I'm proud of her too" (Mother 2, Appendix 3, Section 9).

" But anyway...when she graduated I was full of pride...a bit teary really, she was teary and happy too" (Mother 3, Appendix 5, Section 3).

" I don't tell her that much that I'm proud of her. I tell everyone else too... I should tell her more... but she knows (Mother 4, Appendix 7, 9.A).

Pride and admiration were not only demonstrated as verbalised support by Aboriginal mothers regarding their daughters' pursuits in attempting and succeeding at tertiary education, but also by the ways in which daughters applied and conducted themselves whilst in the process of achieving their academic goals. One mother said " *Then she passed her course and the sheer delight on her face-and she's never looked back. She was so proud of herself and I'm proud of her too*" (Mother 2, Case Study 3, Section 9). Mothers were shown to not necessarily articulate directly to their daughters their pride in their achievements and aspirations, but often transmitted their pride and admiration to other kin members and members of the wider community who readily communicated the message back to the daughters. In this regard one daughter stated: "Yeah, she doesn't say it to me but I know that she says it a lot to other people and they pass it on...(Daughter 4, Case Study 8, 29.A).

It is not apparent why this is so, but it is possible to speculate that this practice of *indirect message transmission of praise* may be related to *shame avoidance* (embarrassment generated from compliments or teasing), and to traditional Aboriginal society's predisposition to ensure that individual group members do not develop a haughty attitude and perceive themselves above the group.

What was quite a unique finding in the study was that there appeared to be an unstated understanding or belief demonstrated by the mother's attitude in the interview situation that, the daughter "*she knows*" (Mother 4, Appendix 7, 9.A). This was regarding the mother's sense of pride in her daughter. In other words, daughters intuitively knew that their mothers were proud of them, it was not something that had to be verbalised. This appears to confirm an '*innate knowingness*' or '*intuition*' Aboriginal daughters have regarding their mothers'

which presents itself in non-tangible manner. This may be connected to the unconditional acceptance of each other that is shared in the Aboriginal mother / daughter relationship. Daughters expressed their pride and admiration of their mothers in relation to their mothers' determination to achieve their goals in life and of the ways and means that mothers had achieved their goals.

This was demonstrated by one daughter's comments:

"Cause she used to work even though she couldn't read /write...

" She learnt basic literacy and numeracy..."

" Well, she had eight children and she was pretty well exhausted a lot of the time" (Daughter 4, Case Study 8, 14.A, 15.A, 16.A). These were not

always related to academic goals and some daughters were in awe of their mothers' capacity to set out to pursue their own goals of success in education; from mothers achieving basic literacy to those who had achieved a tertiary qualification at a later stage in their lives. These were stated by daughters' comments such as:

" Yes, I was very, very proud with my mother. She was very, very young and yet she worked toward a good job in Native Welfare....she started off as a shearer's cook. She was doing her Leaving Certificate when we were doing ours in school and I was proud of her for that. So I knew that I had to do something to make her proud of me" (Daughter 2, Case Study 3, 2.A).

" I was also aware that my mother didn't have the opportunity to get a good education or learn to read and write for that matter...she's just learning now and that makes me feel real proud of her and it makes me want to try harder" (Daughter 1, Case Study 2, 5.A).

Other daughters articulated a strong admiration towards their mothers in overcoming hurdles in life to achieve both minor and major goals. Daughter 2, (Case Study 4), recounted how her mother had overcome a violent marriage, and then struggling as a single parent to achieving a top-level position in an Aboriginal organisation went on to pursue a tertiary education as a mature-age student. There was no indication to suggest that the mothers related their pride in their daughters' achievements to status as may occur in European-based societies. Their pride appeared to be related more to the daughters' application to the task and to the processes involved by which the daughter completed the task, in this case, the achievement of academic goals (Daughter 3, Case Study 6, Section 9).

The behaviour of pride, as this study has shown, presents in a way that can be observed and therefore modelled. Daughters have actively fostered pride as a favourable attribute in their personalities and have shown their admiration of pride in their mothers. Pride appears in an overt manner in that mothers and daughters wanted others to feel proud of them.

In two cases pride was demonstrated by the physical stature of the mother and the way she carried herself. This daughter commented that *"I used to look at the way that she carried herself with dignity and I always wished to be like her"* (Daughter 3, Case Study 6, 1.A). The other daughter (Daughter 2, Case Study 4, 7.A) inferred that dress standards indicated a degree of pride and commented that her mothers had impressed on her the need to:

"Always look presentable....Dress so that other people take notice of you and they can recognise you as being an individual".

Optimism

Optimism, in the context of this study refers to Aboriginal mothers' inclination to see and relate to their daughters, the positive aspects of achievement in tertiary education. In addition to this, Aboriginal mothers display the ability to instill confidence in their daughters in regard to their ability to achieve their educational goals. The other facet of maternal optimism is the confidence that Aboriginal mothers are able to relate their unconditional acceptance to their daughters even in the event of not achieving their educational goals.

Optimism was evident in the process of attempting to develop strategies in order to overcome barriers to participation. Aboriginal mothers contributed in this regard by providing accommodation and other forms of physical and emotional assistance to support their daughters' goals aimed at achieving a tertiary education.

Aboriginal mothers' optimism was demonstrated by behaviours in the emotional management of their daughters by acting as emotional stabilisers. In one case a mother assisted her daughter emotionally when her daughter was thinking of giving up her studies by telling her daughter:

"You're half way there, you're heading at the top of the hill, once you get to the top it's going to be easier coming down" (Mother 2, Case Study 3, Section A). In another case, a daughter who was attending school in the city was repeatedly reassured by her mother that *"things would be OK!"* despite the fact that her daughter was crying every day.

In another case, a daughter was reassured by her mother saying to her: *"Don't be silly. You'll be right."* (Daughter 3, Case Study 6, Section 4).

Her mother (Mother 3, Case Study 5, Section 4) told of a situation where her daughter: *"She'd cry a lot 'cause they teased her but I'd say, 'Don't take any notice of them. They are only jealous.' They were always trying to cut her down. Perhaps they knew how clever she was and that's why they were jealous"*.

Optimism as this study suggests, appears to be an influential behaviour and attribute in the collective maternal psyche of Aboriginal mothers. In other words, in the final analysis, no matter if they (their daughters) do not achieve what they set out to do then it does not really matter, because they are still and will forever be loved, valued and cared for by their immediate family and kinship group. Collectivity, this belief of group acceptance appears to be shared, as part of the Aboriginal worldview. This belief then ensures that every individual in the group can exercise a shared right to the group's resources. Ethnographic notes (1996) suggests that very rarely is an individual marginalised from the total group even for the most serious breach of relationship within the Aboriginal community.

Mother 2, (Case Study 3, Section 11) stated in relation to this that:

" I say that your family is not just your responsibility, your family is your birthright. We all are for each other no matter if someone does something wrong, we are always there ready to make up".

This fact alone may contribute to the Aboriginal person's sense of security even under the most difficult circumstances. In many ways this belief is the ideal that Aboriginal mothers strive for and implement in their everyday nurturing practices.

The display of behaviours in regard to optimism was noted as a positive attitude toward the achievement, aspirations and effort of daughters. These positive attitudes were elicited through Aboriginal mothers' desire to provide support in whatever way they could in both the physical and emotional environments of their daughters. Daughters 1 and 4 related how they had maintained a positive attitude to the education system. Daughter 1 stated that *"...it was much like I was expected to stay home and study, so I did* (Case study 1, 9.A).

Daughter 4 attributed her positive attitude to her position in the family and the fact that she had older siblings that supported her through the role-modelling process and by their success in academic achievement. Her confidence and subsequent optimism toward school began with her learning to read comics before she went to school which were provided by her older brother. The same daughter recounted that: *"they (her mother and father) were really supportive in encouraging my education"* (Case Study 8,20.A). Aboriginal mothers also were optimistic of their daughters' ability to succeed in the course of study that they had chosen even though some daughters were reticent about achieving success, and a fear of failure was articulated from daughters in a number of responses. Daughter 2 claimed that *"I was really frightened of failing and they talked to me and made me see that it would be silly to give up"* (Case study 4,1.A). Daughter 3 spoke of the pressure that she was under, being the first Aboriginal student at the school to go on to Year 12 and to sit the T.E.E (Tertiary Entrance Exam). Daughter 3 was teased by her peers who tried to deter her from her studies by saying: *"You think you're white!"* (Case Study 6, 6.A). This fear of failing was, in one case, directly connected with the daughters' dealings of *mainstream* learning institutions. One daughter expressed both

during the interview and privately, away from the interview situation, her concern regarding her levels of literacy whilst undertaking tertiary studies. This daughter remarked:

"I felt frightened 'cause I didn't know how to spell and read properly so well..."

(Daughter 2, Case Study 4, 5.A). This perception of themselves as possessing inadequate literacy skills is common but often unfounded. Additionally, this may be attributed to a prevalent stereotype that is applied to Aboriginal students generally by the educational system as often not being competent in literacy.

Aboriginal mothers were instrumental with their daughters, in redirecting onto their task when their daughters were confronted with reduced confidence. Aboriginal mothers talked about and listened to their daughter's frustrations and problems and as a consequence were able to boost confidence in their daughters once again, therefore significantly contributing to the emotional health and self - esteem of those daughters. Daughter 2, (Case Study 4, 1.A) mentioned that: *"I was frightened of failing. It really got me down and they talked to me and made me see that it would be silly to give up"*.

Optimism as a behaviour demonstrated by Aboriginal mothers appears to be strongly linked to expectations, in that, Aboriginal mothers expected their daughters to make their own decisions based on future options such as; the capacity to help other people or to have better opportunities than they had. Daughter 4, (Case Study 8, 24.A) commented that:

"But they strongly advised me to stay and I guess that decision/advice was based on their life's experience. And they realised and said the only way for anyone in our family to get a satisfactory wage was to gain an education first".

Aboriginal mothers also displayed optimism in their daily lives and as such they were able to role model optimism, whilst their daughters were growing up and during the period that their daughters were studying at university. They demonstrated this by continuing to exhibit a positive attitude to life and its challenges even in times of extreme hardship. Daughter 4 recounted how her mother and father had lived in tents when rearing the family but that her mother was always so positive and never complained. This was a good example for her daughter who learnt perseverance and optimism.

The review of the literature dealt briefly with the concepts of “self efficacy” and the “halo effect” in relation to expectations and it is suggested that the applications of these notions may be equally valid in contemporary Aboriginal society as to Western society. The study has shown that Aboriginal mothers through demonstrating and role-modelling optimism in their daily lives are able to significantly influence their daughters’ emotional development and perception of themselves and their future lives. Aboriginal daughters through their self – efficacy create an optimistic future, one that enables them to overcome the hurdles that they may encounter as they participate and achieve in tertiary education. Aboriginal mothers were shown to expect that their daughters would identify their own expectations in life and utilised the halo effect by ensuring that their daughters knew that they, as their mothers, believed in their ability to achieve their educational goals. It was Aboriginal mothers that showed their daughters the process of generating optimism in their lives.

Goal Orientation and Discipline

Goal Orientation and Discipline as described in this study applies to the demonstrated ability of Aboriginal mothers to assist their daughters in setting educational goals. Discipline is connected to goal setting, as it is this discipline which is necessary in the lives of the daughters in order to achieve educational goals.

Devotion and communication is reflected in Aboriginal mothers' enthusiastic loyalty to their daughters and demonstrated by the provision of supportive services such as household duties, financial support and the continuous supply of these services. Aboriginal mothers supplied these continually throughout their daughters' lives including their early childhood and up to tertiary education. Communication was shown to be demonstrated by, maternal availability, approachability and mothers' counselling skills.

Aboriginal daughters involved in this study appeared to have a strong understanding of the necessity to set goals. This point is especially relevant because it is the goals that are directly concerned with the western educational system that determines the need for internal and external discipline in their lives. Mothers and daughters both stated the need for discipline and this was identified as being either internal or external. Three of the four daughters remarked that:

"...there was always strict discipline and my parents were strict parents, and I guess that helps a lot too, 'cause I knew that I couldn't go off the beaten track" (Daughter 1, Case Study 2, 8.A).

"I also knew that I would have to discipline myself strongly" (Daughter 2, Case Study 4, 5.A).

"And I guess the structure and discipline of the Catholic School as well as looking after the kids was good discipline" (Daughter 3, Case Study 6, 6.A).

Mother 1, (Case Study 3, Section 4), stated that her mother was instrumental in teaching her discipline.

"Discipline was there and immediate and there were no threats..."

Through Aboriginal mothers' involvement in the day to day demands of school, home preparation for school and the home support that is required to effectively function in the schooling system, Aboriginal daughters have developed the aspiration and the motivation to achieve their educational goals. Without this internal and external discipline it is unlikely that both Aboriginal mothers and their daughters would have achieved such significant goals in their lives. The processes of establishing goals and the prioritising of time are skills that require a great degree of organisation. Daughter 2, (Case Study 4, 8.A) reflected on her mother's organisational skills and said that: *"her organisational skills they're wonderful"*. It is difficult to say conclusively, how the daughters developed these skills however, it is probable that many of these skills developed as a direct result of conditioning through the education system and by learned behaviour from significant others. Discipline was a variable that both mothers and daughters perceived as being very important in achieving goals.

Aboriginal mothers and daughters acknowledged the necessity to have structure and discipline in one's life. Daughter 3, (Case Study 6) remarked that:

"And I guess the structure and discipline at the Catholic school as well as looking after the kids was good discipline" (6.A).

The source of this discipline has been identified as coming from the parents and schooling system. One urban/traditionally orientated Aboriginal mother remarked on her daughters' difficulty in coping with the course and that her daughter found her *"own inner strength"* (Mother 2, Case Study 3, Section 10).

This suggests that this daughter had accessed her own internal discipline. More traditionally-oriented mothers provided structure and discipline in the lives of their daughters by ensuring that they went to school every day, by the setting of limits and moral standards and by the provision of a stable home environment. Mother 1 implemented discipline by setting standards such as, no smoking, no drinking, as well as insisting that her daughter was to dress modestly. The same mother discouraged boy/girl relationships and Mothers 1 and 3 kept a close watch on the peer groups that their daughters were involved with. Mother 1 also verbalised her concern to her daughter regarding the safety of travelling out to communities where there were no kinship ties. One mother regarding her daughter's safety was quite vocal in expressing her concerns. Daughter 1, (Case Study 2, 12.A) demonstrated this respect for her mother's opinion by choosing to work in a job in which her safety regarding the breach of cultural taboos was not threatened.

Daughters therefore were respectful in accepting their mothers' advice in many areas such as the choosing of a career and the means by which that career would be chosen and achieved. Mother 2, (Case Study 3, Section 8) kept on saying to her daughter:

"Look, your young, single and with one child, get yourself a degree and some qualifications before it gets too late".

Daughter 1, when asked: "Did she ever put any pressure on you to make a certain decision", replied;

"Sometimes she'll say, 'What for when you are already set up?' or 'Why?' Just that. She'll ask me but won't try to change me! (Case Study 2, 21.A).

Mother 3 stated that:

"I encourage her to go to Year 12 'cause I said, 'You can always come back to it.' So we talked about nursing-I felt that general nursing would have been the best decision for her- but I always felt that it was her decision that she did enrolled nursing".

Daughter 3, (Case Study 6, 5.A) remarked how she felt that Year Ten (10) had been a critical time to intervene to ensure that the pre-requisite education was obtained so that entry into tertiary education could be activated. This daughter stated that: *"I was fifteen and she encouraged me to do my TEE "*. Daughter 3 also stated that: *"My Mum became influential in helping me to choose what career path to take in my education" (4.A).*

Mother 3, (Case Study 5, Section 2) articulated that:

" I think that the Year 10 is a critical time for parents to start talking about their childrens' careers, you know guiding them".

Three of the daughters in the study shared the experience of being sent to a boarding school for short periods of time to enhance their secondary education. Their mothers stated that the local high school was limiting and that their daughters would gain a considerable wealth of experience from being exposed to the wider Australian community. This factor is a significant variable to the

study however this does not diminish the contribution of Aboriginal mothers as they demonstrated the vision to see that their daughters would benefit from a broader secondary educational experience. Daughters also verbalised that their mothers were always there, in the background, to support them both physically and emotionally.

This is in keeping with the vision of the mothers to ensure that the pre-requisite education was in place to guarantee that future options were not limited. The remaining daughter relocated to the state capital to undertake diploma level studies at a later stage in her education, but found the experience difficult due to being parted from her family for extended periods of time. This experience led her to believe that for her, a suitable course of action would be to study externally, coupled with a block release system. She considered this would be effective in completing an undergraduate degree program whilst meeting her individual needs as an Aboriginal person and her distinct desire to be close to her family.

Goal setting had occurred at an early age for one daughter who stated that:

"She knew that she wanted to be a teacher when she was in Year 4 at primary school" (Daughter 4. Case Study 8).

For the other daughters, the goal setting process required greater exposure to life choices and increased maturation before educational goals were identified. Goal orientation in many ways was influenced by imitating action of significant others such as older sisters (Case Studies 2 and 8). It is highly likely that the daughters have been reinforced to make effective life choices by absorbing an understanding of the experiences of their parents who were denied any possibility of obtaining a sound formal Western education because of the

government policy of their day. Mothers stated the value of formal Western education as a means to survival through economic independence.

In all eight interviews, both mothers and daughters expressed their belief in the value of qualifications acquired through tertiary education as a means to: survival and opportunity in life; a pathway to other options; a means of empowerment and economic independence; as a means by which one gains confidence and improved self-esteem; decreased economic load on the immediate family and a positive opportunity for role-modelling to the next generation. Daughter 1, (Case Study 2,33.A) commented that:

“...because in Aboriginal society if one person does real well then the rest of the family benefit also”.

Daughter 2, (Case Study 4, 3.A) commented on her mother as being a role model and gave her a grading of ten out of ten.

When asked about high school and the TEE, Daughter 4, (Case Study 8) stated that:

“...and I guess that decision / advice was based on their own life's experience. And they realised and said that the only way for anyone in our family to get a satisfactory wage was to gain an education first”.

Mother 2, (Case Study 3, Section 10) commented, in regards to her daughter having obtained a qualification that:

“ My daughter has gone from strength to strength...”

These expressed beliefs support the literature review, which investigated Aboriginal women as the primary economic providers and role models for the younger women of the community in traditional society. This research has

verified these traditional roles which have continued and have been demonstrated in a contemporary context.

Devotion and Communication

One of the most outstanding features of this study has been the identification of Aboriginal mothers' devotion to their daughters. These mothers in question seem to be pivotal to their daughters' success, however, at the same time, they often operated on the parameters of the extended family structure, waiting to attend to needy periods in their daughters' lives. It is at these times that they appear to exert their most dominant influence. There is an attempt therefore to create continuity in their daughters' lives when it sometimes seems that all around chaos reigns. Daughters in all cases spoke of the recognition of the devotion of their mothers to both themselves and the family group. This devotion was demonstrated by Aboriginal mothers providing many services to the daughters, such as cooking, cleaning and washing to counselling, babysitting and providing additional financial support. In all instances, daughters conveyed their upmost respect for their mothers' and of the ways in which mothers had provided care and special attention throughout their lives and when they considered intervention and assistance necessary. Mothers suggested the need to be available, open and approachable to their daughters and these it seemed were the most important factors in honest communication in the mother / daughter relationship. Mother 3, (Case Study 5, Section 5) in regards to communication said:

“She'll always ask my advice and always has done although I don't really pressure her to make the decision that I may want”.

What has become obvious in the study of these relationships are the ways in which the daughters communicated with their mothers. Even though at intervals

in the relationships when daughters and mothers were parted through distance, the use of the telephone was indispensable in maintaining contact with each other, it is not clear who made contact with who. There was no evidence to suggest exactly how frequent these communications were made with the use of the telephone except for Mother 3 who described the frequency of telephone communication with her daughter as being “*heaps*”.

For other daughters, living in close proximity to each other, regular contact was maintained through living with or visiting each other regularly and using the telephone in the interim period. From the daughters' perspectives it was important that the mother/daughter relationship was marked by openness, approachability and confidentiality (Case Study 2). Two daughters suggested that it was sometimes a tenuous process to approach fathers for advice and daughters seemed to prefer initial contact to be made with mothers. Daughter 1 said that, “ *her father used to spoil her 'cause she was his only daughter*” (by that relationship with her mother) and “*Mum used to smooth things over*”.

Cultural information in this study, as related to communication between Aboriginal mothers and their daughters reveals that there is a clearly defined understanding that cultural information in relation to women's business would be passed down through the maternal line. Daughter 4, (Case Study 8,22.A) remarked that when she returned home from the city at one stage of her education, she also learnt the cultural information that she needed to know and that this was told to her by other female family members. This would have contributed significantly to strong links being maintained between mothers, daughters and other female family members. This finding supports the research of Keary (1994) as discussed in the literature review. According to the responses of (Daughters and Mothers 1, 2 and 4), it appeared very important

for daughters to know and respect their culture. This value of their culture as being significant in their lives may have assisted in supporting the development of their strong identity as Aboriginal women, as well as acknowledging the gender specific nature of cultural transmission. One daughter asserted that she went and did the *girlie stuff* with mum, whilst fathers were seen to provide assistance in either education such as homework, financial such as the payment of daughters expenses and / or other life skills support such as fixing up things around the house (Mother 2. Case Study 3, Section 3).

Role Modelling

Role- modelling was significant in this study as daughters imitated their mothers' attitude to daily living and risk-taking behaviours, proactive involvement in the Aboriginal community and determination in achieving personal goals.

Research from educational psychology has established the importance of significant others in the formation of an individual's development. This appears to be a universal imperative in all cultures and as the review of the literature and this study has shown, Aboriginal girls do model to a large degree on females especially within the family and kinship groups. Daughters were active in identifying the women in their families that had provided positive role modelling. According to the daughters' responses, mothers had:

Role modelled a tenacious attitude to life.

This was verbalised by Daughter 1, who commented that:

" I was also aware that my mother didn't have the opportunity to get a good education or to read and write for that matter... she's just learning that now and that makes me feel real proud of her and it makes me want to try harder".

and

" My sister she is seven years older , she is a nurse I can remember to see her study ... role models in my extended has been very supportive".

(Mother 2, Section 2) commented that:

"Mum had strength...Mum had inner quality of strength...Mum looked after all the nieces and nephews. I grew up with them and we were like mothers and sisters to them and you had to have strength. What else could you do, you didn't know about stress".

Daughter 2, (Case Study 4, 3.A) maintained that her mother was a tenacious role- model:

"I'd give her ten out of ten because I know the life she had, from a very, very rough and poor as a child... She came all that way from that to now where she is moving in high levels in Aboriginal Affairs Department".

Similar comments were repeated in other interview responses. This is apparent in the case of Daughter 2, who admitted to modelling herself after her mother (Case Study, 4,8.A).

Demonstrated determination in achieving their goals.

Daughter 2 commented that:

"She did her Leaving and she's got a Bachelor of Applied Science Degree. For that I give her 10/10".

Daughter 4 stated that:

" My Mum... 'cause she used to work even though she couldn't read and write... she learnt basic literacy and numeracy(when she was older)".

Displayed assertiveness especially where the rights of their daughters were concerned.

Daughter 1, verbalised that:

" Yes, a lot of the time Mum fought for me a lot ".

Daughter 4 stated that:

" My parents had always talked about how they have to fight to get the Aboriginal kids into the school and my sister was one of the few Aboriginal kids that the Aboriginal people in Onslow had to fight for - for their education".

Displayed risk-taking behavior.

All eight participants demonstrated risk- taking behavior by either relocating for new opportunities or by undertaking degrees at university.

Daughters 1,2, 3 and 4 expressed their apprehension at having to go away to boarding school or by making the decision to undertake tertiary study.

Daughter 2, (Case Study 4,5.A) explained how she felt frightened of failing, especially given her perceived low level of literacy and fear of public speaking. This daughter stated that:

"I thought – being in a classroom just put the fear in me. Writing essays and assignments and answering people and being responsible. In a childcare centre, I really didn't want to do it".

Daughter 3, (Case Study 6, Section 7) remembered all the pressure of sitting for her TEE and of how it was stated to her that:

I felt pressured doing the TEE and when they said we were competing with the rest of the State, well, that was the worst thing they could have said to me...If I hadn't of known about that I would have been fine".

Been proactive in creating change in the Aboriginal community.

Mothers 1,2,3 and 4 had been actively involved in the Aboriginal community by fighting to overcome social justice issues.i.e. education, housing. (ethnographic notes,1996); Case Study 8,12).

Daughter 2, (Case Study 4) explained how her mother had worked her way from being a shearer's cook to having a high level in Aboriginal Affairs.

Mother 2, (Case Study 3, Section 10), in regards to her daughter helping others since the gaining of her qualifications noted that:" *My daughter has gone from strength to strength and now these people are now feeling strong and helping other young people. We all encourage each other. We are always there".*

One mother who recounted her childhood experiences stated she remembered the strong women on both the patrilineal and matrilineal sides of the family and of her mother who was strong and skillful in improvising to make conditions on the community easier for her children.

Other female kin members such as big sisters were instrumental in the role-modelling process as their younger siblings told of their feelings and observations connected to their elder sisters' pursuit of educational qualifications. One daughter was assertive in pointing out that when her big sister was studying to be a registered nurse that, watching her undertake the long hours of study initially *"turned her off"*, however seeing her graduate created a sense of extreme pride in her sister's achievement. Additionally, once she observed the financial and social benefits of educational qualifications this assisted in creating attitudinal change regarding the possibility of pursuing a tertiary education.

For other daughters, their mothers had role-modelled essential skills and attitudes by undertaking tertiary education at a later stage in their lives. This was perceived as being awe-inspiring to those daughters. The personality characteristics of being strong and dominant were considered by mothers to be favourable attributes to be absorb by daughters and it appeared that mothers have become active in promoting these attributes in their own daughters. In fact, one mother identified these characteristics as "coming down and through the female line" and that these characteristics were now being exhibited in her grand daughters.

Daughters 1,2,3 and 4 mentioned that their mothers had been:

- (1) an excellent role-model to them and to others
and / or
- (2) a role-model in participating and coping in an external
working environment, that is, away from the home.

Additionally, after identifying the role-modelling aspect of their mothers' behaviour as being a major variable that had influenced them, those daughters were then keen to replicate this behaviour for their own daughters. In the words of one daughter, *"I want to be a good role-model for my daughter so that she will be proud of me, just like I'm proud of my mother"* (Daughter 2, Case Study 4).

Daughter 3 described how she wished to be like her mother when she looked at the way her mother carried herself.

"Mum was always an influence and I'll always look up to her. I used to look at the way she carried herself with dignity and I always wished to be like her" (Case Study 6, 1. A).

This in itself may indicate a direct parallel link between the mothers' physical stature and carriage and the daughter's attitudinal expression of admiration and therefore the desire to model her mother.

Daughter 3, (Case Study 6, 1.A) stated in regards to her mother's physical stature that:

" I used to look at the way she carried herself with dignity and I always wished to be like her.... I used to watch the way she'd carry herself, yes, despite the problems at home..."

Daughter 4, (Case Study 8, 18. A), stated that: *" She (her mother) was...she was an excellent role- model"*.

Autonomy in Decision-Making

Autonomy in decision making according to this research was demonstrated by Aboriginal mothers' practice of allowing their daughters to make independent decisions and displaying confidence in their daughters' ability to make effective choices about their education.

The practice of allowing Aboriginal children to make their own decisions and endure the consequences has been well documented. Kearins (1974, p.23) asserts in a study of child-rearing practices in Australia that:

“Aboriginal children (like Aboriginal adults in most social contexts) have no obligation to listen and obey when another makes a request. They may do so, but no punishment or disapproval normally results if they do not”.

It is in this context that the adult process of autonomy in decision-making is to be examined. Daughters in this study reported that the process of making a career decision was not always a clearly defined process. Direction often became apparent only when they had engaged in a wide range of life experiences. Although there was a demonstrated belief in their mothers' opinions and vision, there did not appear to be any pressure placed on the daughters to make the preferred choice of the mothers. The mothers were at all times confident in their daughters' ability to make the most effective decision for their lives, and there was an expectation that they would make up their own mind regarding further education. One traditional mother, Mother 1, (Case Study, 11. A) stated that:

"I just let her do what she wanted to do. They take their own path".

However, mothers did express their definite opinions about their daughters' undertaking studies into Year 12 which would provide them with the pre-requisites for further education if ever they decided to set that as a goal. Once the daughters had made the decision to take on undergraduate studies there emerged the whole-hearted support of mothers and the immediate and extended family groups. Mother 1 declared that

"she expected that her daughter would let her know if there was anything that she needed".

Mother 2 was also proactive in recognising the support that her daughter would need to achieve success at a tertiary level and set about implementing support structures such as the babysitting of her grand-daughter so that her daughter would have adequate time to study and relax as well.

Mother 3, (Case Study 5, Section 4, 5) recognised her limitations in not being physically present for her daughter but always made herself available by phone and said:

" But as for advice and support in other ways, I was there".

" She used to ring me up heaps- and we used to talk a lot on the phone and work through her problems".

Mothers were extremely positive and accepting of their daughters' choices. This factor alone may be considered as a major variable to their daughters' achieving success, as the pressure to achieve was not considered to be '*the end of the world*', especially if they did not achieve their goal in the expected time frame.

Strength and Tenacity

Strength and Tenacity are used to describe Aboriginal mothers' capacity to apply themselves to tasks, overcome hardship and maintain strong motivation even in difficult circumstances. This is also very connected to optimism and these three behaviours appear to go hand in hand.

Two of the over-riding characteristics of the Aboriginal mothers in this study have been their display of strength and tenacity. Their capacity to, not only overcome extreme hardship, but to transfer the value of these characteristics to their daughters has been identified as a possible reason as to why their daughters have pursued and achieved success in tertiary education.

The terms; strength, strong, and dominant, have been repeatedly used to describe the mothers and daughters and the experiences they encountered. The words, strong and strength, have been used as descriptors here by the participants in the study to indicate the characteristics of Aboriginal mothers and daughters as being:

"Drivers of the community"

"Possessing strong characteristics for the next female generation"

" Strong and capable"

" Skilful"

"Able to resist peer group pressure"

"Recognition of intellectual and emotional strength"

"Strong to survive".

Women in relation to strength have shown degrees of tenacity in the way they improvise, in times of hardship and in the demonstrated commitment and application to the tasks that they undertake. In many ways this is connected to goal orientation as they have attempted to make life and its situations easier for

their daughters and other family members. Daughters have observed the continual modelling of determination and how mothers have assisted in exploring options so that their daughters are able to achieve their goals.

In analysis, it could be said that, just as in traditional society, where Aboriginal women were adept in responding to an ever-changing environment, the same could be said of the contemporary environment. Aboriginal women, in the contemporary context respond to a continually changing set of circumstances in their physical and social environments, and therefore, respond accordingly to meet the challenges that those environments dictate. These findings supports the research of Berndt (1963) and Gould (1969) who have proposed that Aboriginal women were and continue to be the backbone of Aboriginal society.

This chapter has presented the findings of research that examined Aboriginal mothers as major contributors to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education. It has presented data that identified the behaviours of pride, optimism, goal orientation and discipline, devotion and communication, role-modelling, autonomy in decision making, strength and tenacity. These are shown to be the primary actions and attitudes that Aboriginal mothers exhibit which contribute to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education. The research also shows how, and in what context, the behaviours are demonstrated and how Aboriginal mothers exercise vision and commitment in creating the environments in which these behaviours occur. The research has validated pre-existing research regarding Aboriginal women and their roles in Aboriginal society. Therefore, a key notion of this study is that Aboriginal mothers do fulfill the roles and influence that they held traditionally and historically. In a contemporary light, these behaviours have shown variation and they have become incorporated into modern child-rearing behaviours that have

continued through their daughters' adult years. These behaviour are economically and emotionally based, survival driven and are displayed in Aboriginal womens' aspirations and motivations to achieve economic independence and community leadership through success in education at the tertiary level. It is in achieving these objectives of power and influence that Aboriginal women gain personal power and access to the echelons of societal power and hence are able to implement strategic initiatives to bring about societal change in relation to issues that affect Aboriginal people.

The study has shown comparability and similarity between Aboriginal mothers and the behaviours that they demonstrate. It is these behaviours that have been a major contribution to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

Education as an asset and as a means of empowerment of the individual, family and wider Aboriginal society has been a goal that has been keenly sought after by the Aboriginal women who have been involved in this study. The importance and identification of the value of gaining tertiary education has been clearly demonstrated by the women who stand at the pivotal point of the community – Aboriginal mothers. These mothers have been instrumental in laying down the basic structure that led to their daughter's decision to undertake tertiary studies. Not only have they succeeded in ensuring that their daughters have gained the pre-requisite education to allow them to make effective and broad life choices but they have also been actively engaged in providing physical and emotional environments necessary to assist them in achieving their educational goals. They have effectively been outstanding role-models for their daughters due to their commitment to pursue their own personal, community and educational goals.

These Aboriginal mothers have demonstrated their influence as major contributors to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education. They have demonstrated the behaviours of pride, optimism, goal orientation and discipline, devotion and communication, role modelling, autonomy in decision - making, strength and tenacity. These are the behaviours that their daughters have identified which have most assisted them to effectively participate and achieve in tertiary education.

Historically, these Aboriginal mothers have often come from backgrounds that are socially and economically disadvantaged and yet they have achieved positions in the community in which they have been accorded the highest level of respect from both the Aboriginal and wider mainstream communities. Their influence in providing direction and support in the family and community is indisputable and their discernment in decision-making is formidable. They, in turn have been able to create for their daughters' functional, physical and emotional environments that have supported them to participate and achieve in tertiary education.

Their daughters' journey to gain recognition, qualifications and credibility from mainstream society has been long and arduous and Aboriginal mothers continue to summon the courage and strength to fight the social injustices that continue to impact on Aboriginal social justice and education. Perhaps, it is Aboriginal mothers' histories and life experiences which have exerted the greatest influence, and which have directed their child-rearing practices connected with education. Additionally, Aboriginal daughter's knowledge of what is required to achieve major life goals has been extensive and experiential in development and no doubt it is from their mothers that much of their learning has been acquired. In light of this study, the dispositions for life-long learning has been identified as; pride, optimism, role- modelling, goal orientation and discipline, devotion and communication, autonomy in decision - making, strength and tenacity.

Much of the collective findings of this research have spanned both the lives of the Aboriginal mothers and their own mothers' as well. Some case studies and

ethnographic records have identified these behaviours as spanning four successive female generations. As such, it is likely that some Aboriginal daughters involved in this study are the educational product of the accumulative knowledge and experience of preceding female generations. Therefore, these Aboriginal mothers may have assimilated to a certain extent as result of long-term exposure to mainstream society.

Aboriginal mothers as this research has proposed, do hold power and authority to influence their daughters however, it is not held and actioned in a way that is demanding or aggressive. The influence occurs through the subtle demonstration of behaviours and attitudes in everyday life that have guided the individual educational journeys of their daughters.

Aboriginal mothers have traditionally, and continue to demonstrate the behaviours that contribute significantly to the survival of their families and communities. They have shown their capacity to exercise vision and commitment in ascertaining the goals that need to be achieved by the Aboriginal community and more specifically their daughters, if empowerment and self-determination is to be collectively and singularly attained. Aboriginal daughters in this study have also been influenced by numerous other factors in their lives, which have also impacted on their participation and achievement in tertiary education. Three of the four daughters identified that their fathers were to a degree, contributors in many ways in supporting them in the physical and emotional environments and their contribution is certainly not to be ignored. The fact that three of the four daughters in the study also went away to boarding school in no way minimises the impact of their Aboriginal mothers' contribution. It is they who, as this research has shown, consistently demonstrated specific behaviours in the physical and emotional environments of their daughters to

support their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education. Of course, no study can ensure an absolute answer, there will always be impacting variables that have not been addressed. The Aboriginal mothers in this research are quite unique and in the minority if one considers the participation and achievement of other Aboriginal daughters in tertiary education. The sample group of Aboriginal mothers that was selected to participate in this study may have influenced the uniformity of findings. Furthermore, the nature of the study may have proved attractive to certain Aboriginal mothers and their daughters and this may have motivated them to participate in the research. As such the study is perhaps not representational of all Aboriginal mothers whose daughters have participated and achieved in tertiary education. Recognising these factors, it is equally valid to acknowledge the study as providing a measure of understanding as to why some Aboriginal mothers are major contributors to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education and how they have succeeded in accomplishing this outcome.

In achieving their goals of success in tertiary education these Aboriginal daughters have attained knowledge, not only about their chosen academic discipline of study but also regarding the functioning of the western bureaucratic system. This knowledge then facilitates societal power and therefore accords these Aboriginal daughters status in having achieved a level of equality with other individuals in the Aboriginal and wider community who are in positions of authority and decision-making. As such they have been able to exercise that acquired knowledge, power and status within the Aboriginal and wider community to effect a significant difference in their own lives and the lives their own families, kinship group and larger Aboriginal community. Aboriginal mothers have expressed their heartfelt appreciation regarding the selection of the research topic, that is, in recognising their contribution to the lives of their

daughters and that of others in the Aboriginal community. Through their participation in this study, Aboriginal mothers have identified and validated the essential behaviors involved in mothering adult daughters that do assist and make a major contribution to their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education. Finally, and from a personal perspective, the Aboriginal women involved in this study have become in many cases my mothers, my sisters and my teachers. They have shown me their unequivocal trust, co-operation and affection and to them I am forever indebted for their contribution to this research.

Implications of the research

The purpose of this study as stated in the introduction has been to investigate the role that Aboriginal mothers play in their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education. At the beginning of this study it was anticipated that there would be some significant findings once the data had been analysed and documented. The research findings have conclusively shown that Aboriginal mothers, given that they create functional physical and emotional environments do have the capacity to significantly influence their daughters' participation and achievement in tertiary education. This is accomplished through the demonstration of specific behaviours that have been identified. However it is important to remember that '*good research*' must be readily usable and translatable by the Aboriginal community (Brennan, 1980), and its application seen as identifiable to specific contexts. Hence, the anticipated outcomes of this research will impact on the following areas of Aboriginal education.

Aboriginal University Programs and (T.A.F.E) Technical and Further Education Aboriginal Programs

These programs may benefit by tutors and co-ordinators meeting and talking with the mothers of students to actively encourage them to assist their daughters' education. This could be done by emphasising the need for them to be optimistic, to assist in the planning of goals, to communicate on a regular basis with their daughters, especially if they have moved away from home, to pursue their education and to demonstrate their commitment. As this research

has demonstrated, it is clear that maternal support of both the physical and emotional kind is considered by daughters to be essential in the achievement of educational goals. The major factors that have assisted in Aboriginal daughters' participation in education as young children growing up have been identified as coming from a consistent source - the mothers.

With the implementation of special Aboriginal university programs, it is often the case with mature age students that they have the responsibility of young children as well as their study to consider. Aboriginal mothers have shown to assist in the childcare of their daughters' children by providing respite care so their daughters can rest and recuperate from academic demands. They have also shown to be supportive by providing baby-sitting when daughters needed time to study.

Relevant literature and audio-visual material can be developed and loaned to Aboriginal families by universities so that mothers can develop suitable structures and strategies to assist adult students achieve their goals. Through the creation of realistic and achievable expectations mothers can show their support of their adult children's decisions.

Aboriginal School Education Programs such as the Aboriginal Secondary Students Parents Association (A.S.S.P.A.).

This association could gain benefit by developing home education videos and literature that familiarise parents with all of the behaviours that will encourage their children in their education. Similarly as with university education programs A.S.S.P.A. can take a greater and more proactive role by assisting Aboriginal parents to absorb and demonstrate those effective behaviours that will make a difference to their children's participation and achievement in secondary

education. The Aboriginal mothers and daughters who have participated in this research have articulated the necessity for parents to encourage and advise their children especially around Year Ten or fifteen years of age. Career choices need to be made within the school curriculum in Year Ten and for many the road ahead in secondary education appears too difficult. This is when they may need a great deal of encouragement. Many Aboriginal students see the short term benefits of leaving school such as their own social security benefits and a percentage of teenage girls become pregnant with their first child that for some may be a way to opt out of secondary school.

Community Education and Welfare Programs

'Best Start' and *'Aboriginal Family Futures'* programs implemented by government education, welfare and health bodies. As these programs are conducted with the aim of holistically and collectively improving children health welfare and education it is paramount that mothers and other family members know and demonstrate the specifics that are critical to achievement of favorable outcomes in program delivery. Participating bodies in these parenting and education programs when working with Aboriginal parents, need to identify ways to assist their children with homework and school related activities.

Additionally, they need to learn to structure their home and working environment to accommodate for student needs, and to absorb those significant behaviours that will effectively enhance their educational prospects.

Perhaps, this application of research to a practical context is one of the most important reasons for having conducted this research. The implications that it holds for current Aboriginal education and parenting programs are consequential as the process of instilling educationally supportive child-rearing practices needs to begin at the grass- roots level when children are in their

formative years (0-5 years) and into the primary years. Aboriginal mothers need to develop sound habits and practices in these years when their children are still extremely impressionable.

Future research

Future research may benefit by creating new understandings and patterns associated with the topic of Aboriginal education such as, research that will:

- (a) identify Aboriginal fathers' behaviours and role in their children's education,
- (b) isolate the role-modelling behaviours that take place between Aboriginal fathers and sons and its connection to boys achievements in education.
- (c) examine the relationships between Aboriginal mothers' role in the attainment of their sons' educational success.
- (d) investigate the behaviours of Aboriginal fathers which influence their daughters' participation and achievement in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

From this study there is also knowledge to be learnt about how Aboriginal mothers, fathers and extended kin can structure their families, to work together, to help their children through primary and secondary education and into tertiary studies.

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APPENDIX 1A

CASE STUDY 1. MOTHER 1. TRADITIONAL

1.Q. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, maybe where you were born and where you went to school?

1.A. *I was born on a station out Yandeyarra way, long way – where they are carting Manganese.*

2.Q. So you where born out there? How long did you live out there?

2.A. *We were kids, we live on the station. Then we moved into town because the stations didn't support us anymore. I didn't have much education cause of the welfare – often we were not allowed to go to the white schools. I didn't have the opportunity you know, the welfare was very, very cruel. We used to move around a lot cause the welfare tried to take us kids! 'Cause we were part white.*

3.Q. Did you feel a little bit shamed because you did not go to school?

3.A. *Yes, and I couldn't read or write and it worries me.*

4.Q. With your daughter did it worry you that she would get a good education?

4.A. *Yes, I was worried, True! I wanted her to have the opportunity in life. I thought it was hard, not being able to read and write. I'm just learning now.*

5.Q. **What did you do to help her to get to uni?**

5.A. *Without me? I don't know. I like to think that I have helped her. I was always there for her to talk and listen.*

6.Q. **Did you ever push her?**

6.A. *No, I never push her, kids only go wild if you push them too hard. You got to show them lots of love. They go wild, I just let her do what she wanted to do, they follow their own path.*

7.Q. **Did you guide her?**

7.A. *She always come to me for advice, but I didn't push her, she came to me, but she went to her dad for other things like homework.*

8.Q. **Are you proud of her?**

8.A. *Yeah, I'm proud of her, I'm proud of all my kids, in different ways. Sometimes, I'm proud of my daughter who is a nurse too, she works in Community Health, it's a demanding job for her, lots of pressure. But this one, she's my baby, so in that way I'm very proud.*

9.Q. Did you ever say to her “You’ve got to get a good education.”?

9.A. *No, I never push her, she got her own journey. No, they just knows and she knows too.*

10.Q. Did your life and experiences and not being able to go to school very much encourage them?

10.A. *They know that I didn’t have a lot of education. I can read and write a little bit – I’m going to go back and learn proper now.*

11.Q. What happened when she told you what she was going to do?

11. A. *That’s OK! It’s up to you. I’ll help how I can anyway.*

12.Q. Yeah, and how have you supported her through her uni studies?

12.A. *Well, I got another girl to help her with her homework and she went to homework classes she too. That was good and I’m here when she needs me, you know, to talk, listen and sometimes cry.*

13.Q. But, you were there in the background at home, so what did you do?

13.A. *Yeah, I was at home doing washing, cleaning, cooking you know, but I help her through this, she was really going though, she appreciated her father and me and tried her best, she never got upset, she never gave up, she kept on trying and kept on working I know she thinks and she says that she could have never done it without me.*

She's a real good girl, I looked after her and I made sure she got to school every day. When she was growing up. My kids wanted to go to school every day even when she sick. The other three children, they like it so she liked it and they helped her cause she was the baby.

14.Q. Did you have an idea in your mind how far in school would she go?

14.A. *Her other sister and big sister did all of school to Year Twelve, I think they all knew that I reckoned that it was important.*

15.Q. Did you try to tell her what to do with her education – Maybe what she should be?

15.A. *No – she made her own mind – she strong like that. She's always made her own mind up.*

16.Q. What did you do to help her through school?

16.A. *She had everything she needed, whatever she needed we got it for her. She only ask and we did it, her father and me. My kids all made up their own minds and we supported them.*

17.Q. Do you think you helped her to make a decision to go to uni?

17.A. *Yeah – a little bit – yeah but I know she'll make her own decision.*

CASE STUDY 2. DAUGHTER 1. URBAN DIVERSIFICATION

1.Q. Can we start by talking about study, how did you come to do law, can you begin by telling us what degree your studying and how you came to study this?

1.A. *Well, I never intentionally started out to do law, it was something that just happened, I guess I seen the position as the financial councillor at the Community Legal Service. At the time, at this stage, I didn't know what I was getting myself into but I applied anyway and I got the position and once I was working there over nine months I realised that law was really interesting and that I actually wanted to continue with it. I wasn't happy just sitting being a financial councillor so I spoke to a social worker where I was employed and she gave me all the other options of, umm, different avenues of study. So I decided yeah, I'm gonna do this and now I'm into it. In fact I'm studying Bachelor of Laws through Murdoch Uni and it just was ... I honestly cannot tell you why! But I'm just interested in this field of work and it did take me four years to discover that I really wanted to be.*

2.Q. So, in order to do what you are doing now, undertaking your studies you have to, you have achieved quite highly at high school it seems.

2.A. Yeah.

3.Q. Did you go to year 11 and 12?

3.A. *Yeah, I've completed year twelve with my TEE and I suppose it was enough to get into Dental Therapy but it wasn't enough to do mainstream law, that's why I decided to start doing a Bachelor of Laws study and if I successfully complete that, that it would be enough to get into mainstream law but from high school.*

4.Q. So, were you a very motivated student at high school?

4.A. *Not as far as sitting in the classroom and learning!*

5.Q. Did you always want to do your TEE or did you have to be nudged along to do it?

5.A. *I wanted to do my TEE because I knew at that stage what I wanted to be a dental therapist. I had to take the right path to get me there. I was also aware that my mother didn't have the opportunity to get a good education or learn to read and write for that matter... she's just learning now and that makes me feel real proud of her and it makes me want to try harder.*

6.Q. Had you considered law as an option before working at the legal service ever crossed your mind?

6.A. *No, not really.*

7.Q. **So after being exposed to that area and seeing the work situation...
that was for how long?**

7.A. *9 months.*

8.Q. **What environment in your home and your work social life, do you think contributed to you making who you are today? What role did your family do to support your aspirations?**

8.A. *Dad bought it for me or I'd get my own way. I suppose that would be a major factor. Dad bought a car for me I get in my own way. I suppose with me being his only daughter is a major factor. Like I'm not saying that discipline wasn't there or anything, there was always strict discipline and my parents were strict parents and I guess that that helps a lot too cause I know that I couldn't go off the beaten track. At that time though I thought I hated having parents like that but now I realise that its good because they put me on the right track and they showed me what's wrong you know with anything in general...they were not just saying it for nothing*

9.Q. **When you say discipline what sort of discipline was imposed on you? For example, did you have to study on certain nights and was your social group/peers influenced by your mother?**

9.A. *No, it was much like I was expected to stay home and study, so I did. It was because my parents were old fashioned and they still live like they used to live before. They were strict in that manner smoking or drinking was a big no, no. It's hard to describe. They had solid values, but I suppose I see a lot of parents these days and it's OK if you walk, her daughter around to have tea with Mum and Dad. There as that was not on with my parents like no way!*

10.Q. So would you say that they didn't want you to have a full-on relationship with a member of the opposite sex until you were mature enough to cope?

10.A. *Yeah, and even with dress standards you had to be fully clothed... you weren't allowed to have anything sexy or appealing to the public, you had to cover up, you know because with my Dad, because I'm a girl I was always with my Mum doing the "girly" stuff. I always wore pink, you know because of the typical stereotype I suppose.*

11.Q. So I guess you were reared as people say to be a young lady?

11.A. *Yeah, and that's where I retaliated as well because I was a total tomboy when I was a kid, although I was always in pretty little dresses with big ponytails.*

12.Q. What were the encouraging words... or did your mother ever say what her expectations of you were?

12.A. *Well nothing really 'cause, like I said, I do what I want to do and whatever I decide Mum always supported me but, as far as culture is concerned she was very strict so she didn't like me working in field jobs with e.g. ATSIC cause she didn't want me travelling to Aboriginal communities where we didn't know any people because of the culture. She was very scared in that way, so I suppose that's what made me scared and that's why I never ventured into maybe ATSIC or DEET or other organisations.*

13.Q. **When you say culture do you mean that it's more of a traditional culture on communities or that you hear stories of women that who go out to communities and are taken advantage of?**

13.A. *Kind of, because my Mum has been brought up in the traditional lifestyle. I mean she's from the desert and has lived most of her life like that. She knows her tradition in and out and still lives it. So she just gets scared for things like walking onto the wrong land.*

14.Q. **You mean taboos that you would be punished for?**

14.A. *Yeah, and um... speaking to people that I may not be allowed to talk to. She's (Mum) just also afraid that if I do something wrong it will turn back on her. So, what could the repercussions of my behaviour... my Mum knows that because she's from Yandeyarra way and she is still very strict on her tradition and culture and so is my Dad but because he is from Roebourne and has been away from there for a long time he doesn't really worry about this area 'cause I guess he just leaves it all up to Mum 'cause this is closer to her people and land.*

15.Q. So would you say that you follow your mother's traditional influences from her tradition than your father?

15.A. *Definitely, but my father refuses to talk about his way for whatever reason I don't know, but he does know his Dad's home language but he doesn't impose that on me.*

16.Q. Who do you think was more influential, your mother or your father?

16.A. *Umm... Well tell you the truth, my father in different ways 'cause Mum has three other kids and so Dad was on for living in the township. Dad was the one who showed me the ropes more or less or bought me up 'cause I think he had more to do with the white system. But as far as being a girl and all those girl things, Mum played her part in that and as far as cleaning, cooking, washing it was Mum. Also Mum was the major one who told me the cultural knowledge.*

17.Q. So as far as that, did she do very much for you, ... like doing your washing, cleaning, did she do all of that for you?

17.A. *Yes, and she still does.*

18 Q. So do you think she has been the major source of support for you?

18.A. *Definitely, I couldn't cope without her and they both have been great because of the financial support also. But I guess also mum gave me more freedom than my father did, like ... he was a lot more stricter on me. So like, I could tell Mum anything whereas I couldn't tell my Dad*

anything. He'd go off the "deep end" and Mum would cover up for me all the time.

19.Q. So do you think what you were trying to do caused friction between Mum and Dad?

19.A. *Yes, a lot of the time Mum fought for me a lot and then there would be some days that Dad would do that too. Mum is open to talk about anything from one extreme to the next and I guess when I need to speak to someone I know I can talk to Mum. I know it's safe and protected and it would not go any further than the walls.*

20.Q. Did you go to Mum to ask when a decision had to be made?

20.A. *No, I just say "Mum I'm gonna do this!"*

21.Q. Did she ever put pressure on you to make a certain decision?

21.A. *Sometimes she'll say "What for when you already set up" or "Why?" Just that. She'll ask me but won't try to change me!*

22.Q. Did you think your mum was quite a motivating force as well?

22.A. *I guess I can say to Mum I'm doing this 'cause I know she'll question "Why?" but she'll go along with my decision so in that way she motivates me.*

23.Q. How long has it taken you to decide what you wanted to do?

23.A. *Through work, not into mainstream law because I didn't qualify. It's like I suppose if I have to qualify and have to do this course successfully and then they'll take you into mainstream law, good performance, not slack effort. If I'd complete that I'd go on. It's a real test and their watching you, it's a long road. The Bachelor of Law if I knew I wasn't to get anything out of it I wouldn't have done it but I know what it will entitle me to. You've always got a point of reference with law that all laid down behind you.*

24.Q. How long to go now 'til you finish? How long has it taken you since you enrolled?

24.A. *Firstly, I did a five week course pre-law course, two year then one year to go, I think.*

25.Q. How does your mother feel about you studying law do you think?

25.A. *Um*

26.Q. Do you think she is proud of you?

26.A. *Yes, I think she does but by the same token I think she feels scared. I guess it all the weird stories you hear on the television and media, weird movies, no, she's afraid I'm going into a dangerous area.*

27.Q. So what do you think your mother sees as being the essential for a good job gained through qualifications?

27.A. *I think it's a whole lot of issues. In our family, we struggled, he had our up and downs hard time to me. To compare myself as a seventeen year old and when I was seventeen I wanted to do it so I did it. You know sometimes I would get to a stage where I didn't know where to go next and Mum and Dad didn't know so I went out and found out myself. I went to the teachers or DEET I think you had to be strong minded and you have to be happy to know with your home situation and guess you need good financial support. I think it's the environment that you put yourself in the people you hang around with can influence you too.*

28.Q. When you look at yourself those skills of being strong and single minded, where do think they have come from? Is it part of your personality, or is it cultural?

28.A. *Honestly, I think it's from being spoilt, 'cause anything I ever wanted my parents have got for me. You know or anything I ever wanted to do they have found some way for me to do it. But that's hard for some people 'cause they haven't got the finances to be able to do that for their children. It's a combination of the family and social support and the parental support.*

29.Q. How important is that emotional support do you think?

29.A. *I guess my biggest blockage was to go to the city to study, to leave I'm too close to my family, I can't leave, if I could take them with me I would.*

30.Q. Ongoing support even though you're a grown woman, has that been essential?

30.A. *Absolutely, if I didn't have that I couldn't do it!*

31.Q. Did you have any other role model?

31.A. *My sister she is seven years older she is a nurse I can remember to see her study and sent to her graduation as well, and I could see that it was all worth it. Role models in my extended family has been very supportive there really my immediate family, my family are my friends I stuck to my cousins for friends.*

32.Q. How did you feel her when you saw her studying at night and having to commit so much time to it?

32.A. *I felt that's not for me, but when I saw her graduate it was a happy feeling, and then I saw her going to work and seeing her being so independent. She had her own house, car, money... then I thought it was worth it.*

33.Q. Did that economic independence that your saw as a result of your sister's qualifications inspire you?

33.A. *Yes, because in Aboriginal culture if one person does real well then the rest of the family benefit also. My Dad grew her up as his own too and she went to boarding school and had a good education as well, like me. I went to uni where as she did her training through the hospital. When I did dental therapy I went to Perth it was a killer I missed my family so*

much I was seventeen/eighteen, I was surprised I finished as I missed them so much.

34.Q. Did you ring your mum up much?

34.A. *Ha!.... Yeah!... all the time, thank God for the phone. Now I do block release and external studies, three times a year I go. I get help from a solicitor at work. She helps a lot, she's like a mentor and I use her resources. But I'll be so glad when I have finished, it's been a long hard struggle, but not long to go now, and it will all be worth it.*

APPENDIX 1C

Values, Beliefs, Attitudes, Expectations of Aboriginal Mothers and Daughters

DAUGHTER (Y2012) - Beliefs, attitudes, expectations	MOTHER - Beliefs, attitudes, expectations
Discipline Internal(Home), external(school)	Freedom in decision – making in daughters career choice
Year 12/TEE as a pathway to Tertiary education	Discipline given – No smoking, drinking and things like that
Freedom to be a tomboy	Modesty
Traditional lifestyle to respect one's culture	Femininity/Socially controlled
Sisters graduation as a nurse assisted in personal motivation	Strictness on traditional culture and beliefs
Freedom in behavior	Education as a necessity for survival in society
Openness and approachability of mother	Opportunity in life to acquire reading and writing skills as a necessity
Support of father.....	Never pushed her/always given respect
Acceptance of daughter's decision	Value in use of intuition / "she just knows"
To keep goal oriented and sustain focused	Recognition of her own influence on daughter
Father influential in life because she was the only daughter and because of his knowledge of the 'white' system.	Gender specific roles – girls do stuff with Mum but did things with Dad too
Mother was the major source of support- goals unobtainable without her.....	Supported daughters choice of her career
Belief in the devotion to her by her mother	Women have to be strong to survive.
Single mindedness/do what you want to do	Doesn't like daughter in a career/job considered unsafe/concern for wellbeing
Commitment and positive attitude towards schoolwork and higher education	Pride in daughter, unconditional acceptance of daughter
Tenacious in application to the goals in life	Validation of daughters goodness
To be supported by decision and be supported in her own decisions.....	Acknowledgement of big sister as a role model
Mother would cover up for her.....	Assertive to others in relation to daughters needs
Dad would be stricter but gave unconditional acceptance and love- solid values	Devotion to daughters needs in order for her to obtain her qualification
Mum would look after her/appreciation of her mother	Encouraged daughter to make her own decisions
Financial support provide to obtain what she needed	Expected that daughter would like school like her other children
Through qualification – own money, own house, economic independence were attainable	Appreciation of daughter that she would go to year 12 and do her TEE like her brothers and sisters
Parental pride in daughter/ daughter intrinsically knew this	Expectation that she would make up her own mind about further education and expectation that she would ask for what she needed.

APPENDIX 1D

ENVIRONMENTS CREATED BY ABORIGINAL MOTHERS FOR THEIR DAUGHTERS

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT
COOKING, CLEANING, WASHING DONE	HAPPY HOME
ASSISTED IN EXPLORING OPTIONS TO ACHIEVE	POSITIVE PEER GROUP
LOOKED AFTER HER DAUGHTER	SUPPORTIVE WORKING / STUDY ENVIRONMENT
CREATING A QUIET PLACE TO STUDY	CLOSENESS TO FAMILY
ASSERTIVE MOTHER HELPED ENSURED THAT OTHERS KNEW IMPORTANCE OF HER STUDY	ABSOLUTE AND TOTAL SUPPORT FROM IMMEDIATE AND EXTENDED FAMILY
HOME AS POINT OF REFERENCE	ROLE MODEL – SISTER A NURSE GRADUATION OF SISTER FROM A TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTION
SECURITY OF PHYSICAL HOME STRUCTURE	MOTHER AVAILABILITY
PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL GOODS	ROLE MODEL – WORK COLLEAGUES
	KNEW SHE WOULD BE LOOKED AFTER
	BEING SPOILT

APPENDIX 2A

CASE STUDY 3.MOTHER 2.URBAN / TRADITIONAL

Section1. *I was born and spent most of my life Port Hedland and grew up as a kid in Port Hedland. We lived at a place called 12 mile (now Tjalka Wara). In the family Mum and Dad had a capacity to attract kids. I guess Dad was a very strong disciplinarian, he never went to school or couldn't read or write but had all the knowledge in the world. Mum was educated, she came from Beagle Bay so she had been educated on the mission. She could sing in Latin and German, in the Aboriginal language before English, yet we were never taught our culture because Mum was one of the stolen generation and Dad was a product of having been hidden away because he was light skinned/fair. But we learnt to pick that up as kids having lived next to the 12 mile. People used to fear Dad in our family because he was very moody, and I mean he'd rake the yard one way and then the other and everything had to be just so, but as you grew older you could see that it was Mum who was the strong one in the family because we didn't have a fridge, we didn't have running water and we all slept on a bit of mesh on buckets. It was Mum that got the woolpacks and collected the bits of wool, cut up all the bits of clothes and made a patchwork quilt and put the woolpack in the middle so that we could have a blanket. Mum was the one who made the little comforts around the house. She was the one who would make a meal out of nothing and always having foods, we always had food, we never went without. We never ever starved as kids and having to wash all the clothes by hand, and when I look back, Mum was the one.*

Section 2. *And Mum had sisters who were very....strong. I can remember all my Aunties on my Mum's side and my grandmother or Granny Lillian who was a very tall strong striking woman. Dad's side of the family. All Dad's sisters were very strong women. Grandma, his Mum was just a tiny little petite thing, she was struggling to make five foot but was she a strong bossy woman. Very dominant, so unfortunately or fortunately whichever way you choose to look at it, the women on my paternalistic sides and maternalistic side were very dominant women. And well...my Dad's grand aunt on my father's side, I can vividly remember her as a child as a huge statuesque, rubenesque woman and she had this very long hair. It used to set on her head like a big damper. She was a woman that you feared, yet she was very gentle. There was something about her.*

Section 3. *So women have always played a major role in my life and yet it was my father that grew me up because I had two sisters, two brothers me and then two brothers and Dad couldn't be bothered mucking around teaching a girl anything different. So I was taught everything that my brothers were taught like fixing things around the house up and I use to say to Dad, "Do you realise I'm a girl?". "You know I'm not a boy?", and he just never treated me any different because I was there, I had to do everything that they, the boys did, so, and it was always challenging to be better than my brothers and to beat them. If they drove a car I wanted to beat them at it to show that I could do it too to prove that I fitted in. Yeah, it was an interesting childhood and as I said we lived out of town and there was no sealed roads then and all those sort of things. But Mum and Dad knew everyone's kids. They were Mum and Dad to all those kids when their father went to gaol or the mother ran away. We always ended up with all these kids and all the weekend people would come out with their kids and if*

parents couldn't control their kids. There were no child homes or orphanages where you could send kids in those days.

Section 4. *He used to use a belt with a horsewhip and he would nod once and you had to know what he meant. He never used it on the spur of the moment. He was teaching us discipline and you had to know discipline to survive. You knew what your jobs were. You knew that you had to do them and if you didn't you were reminded very, very smoothly. Mum was just the opposite she used to ask us, but then Mum had a temper too. She'd hit you on the head with the frying pan. Discipline was there and then immediately and there were no threats. There was no money for education and there was no money for brand new clothes. You know Mum would go and get second hand clothes off people- then you would go to school on the Monday, thinking you were real flash and then all the kids would say, "You've got my clothes on. But you know, it really used to hurt, but then I got one back at then and I say "Stuff you". I was very good at spelling and I thought there's got to be something that I'm good at. They could not beat me at that so that was my way of getting back at them.*

1.Q. So you were a very strong willed woman right from the beginning?

1.A. *I had no choice cause Mum and Dad were like that. Mum had strength. Dad's strength was out there you know what it was like but Mum had that inner quality of strength.*

Mum looked after all the nieces and nephews. I grew up with them and we were We were like mothers and sisters to them and you had to have strength. What Else could you do, you didn't know about stress, you didn't know about these things.

See, what you never had then you never missed. I mean like butter and boiled

lollies. We never had those things, never missed them. We had our fun, we were healthy never went to hospital except Mum used to go to hospital to have a baby and that's it.

Mum used to look after everyone else's kids her sisters and everyone, all of us. Our family have seemed to have always looked after other peoples kids. But you know, we give them self esteem and pride and build them up and then they move on.

Section 5. *So it's now that I look back and I regret thinking these things about my parents but what they were doing is teaching us things about survival, discipline and that building and reaching out to our people. You always say as a kid that you've never going to be like your parents but you end up being like them.*

Section 6. *The day I turned 14 my Dad had a job lined up for me because you didn't have money to go high school in Perth and then they didn't have a high school here in Port Hedland. And there was nowhere for you to go to school after you turned 14 unless your parents had money and they could afford to send you to school in Perth. Mine certainly didn't. I turned 14 and I started work in the Port Hedland Hospital and lived with aunty in town by the week. We had old T Model Ford. We sat on the back with pig slops. You learn to turn things around after a while. I lived with my aunty and she looked after lots of kids too. She was always looking after kids. I had another job at the Flying Doctor Service. There was only movies on the Saturday. Then I went out to a station. I wanted to get out bush for one and a half years. Mum and Dad dropped me off but they left. I worked there for a while but they tried to control me there but I was out for a bit of freedom. But I went to Derby for a funeral and the sister up there gave me a job and I stayed for two and a half years. I lived with them and*

they said "Why don't you go and do nursing?" So that when I started nursing and there was always these women, pushing, pushing, pushing. Once I finished my nursing I came back up to the Port Hedland Hospital. I had a natural way with people.

Section 7. I met my husband and married and I wanted always to do more. I was nineteen / twenty when my daughter was born. I started thinking, there's got to be more to life. I started a youth group but the marriage started to crack up. I think that I rebelled when I married him. I left after 11 years. Then I was a single parent. I enrolled in studies by correspondence through Mt Lawley campus of Adult Education. The first year I passed with flying colours, all by correspondence.

Section 8. With my own kids and my daughter well I sent her away to boarding school to learn a bit more about life in and be exposed to other things. Then she grew up and met someone and that was a bad marriage. My daughter followed us around. She was working in school as a Teacher's Assistant up 'til then she only worked in pubs. She started working in the office at Papunya. I kept saying to her when we moved over here to Hedland from Marble Bar. "Look, you're young single and with one child, get yourself a degree and some qualifications before it gets too late." She had her house and she found out about the course going at Hedland College. And she said "It's going to be hard and I get this much money. I've got a car on hire purchase" and I said, "We'll help you".

Section 9. My daughter went to Hedland College to do the CCC (Childcare) certificate and she'd got to the state, "That's it, I'm giving up it's too hard". But I say "You're half way there, you're heading at the top of the hill once you get to

the top it's going to be easier coming down". And she'd cry, so we'd get her daughter and my husband would make the car payment. Then she passed her course and the sheer delight on her face - and she's never looked back. She was so proud of herself and I'm proud of her too.

Section 10. *She found her own inner strength and she did and she's just doing marvelous things now. And then I said to say to her, "You've always got to strive for something better". So I did too, I went study to do my Bachelor of Applied Science. I encouraged my sister too to take up studies. As I grew older and with a degree I'd got the confidence. My daughter has gone from strength to strength and now these other young people are now feeling strong and helping other young people. We all encourage each other. We are always there.*

Section 11. *I say that your family is not just your responsibility, your family is your birthright. We all care for each other always no matter if someone done something wrong, we are always ready there to make up. But that's why Aboriginal women are so lucky 'cause not only may the have their Mum but they got lots of other women to help look after them as well.*

CASE STUDY 4. DAUGHTER 2. URBAN.

Section 1. *I was a single mother coming out of a bad marriage. I went to live with my mother in Marble Bar and she had to move. She got a transfer, so I automatically moved with her and I got a Homeswest house and then I was. I went and applied for a few jobs about but I couldn't get them and then the jobs came up at the primary school as a Teacher's Aide on the Aboriginal Teacher's Aide Training Program so I applied for that.*

Section 2. *While I was doing that there was this lovely lady who did a lot for Aboriginal Education, Jean Richards and she got me interested in applying for the Child Care Course at Hedland College. So, I enrolled in the course and gave me lot of support and another lady called Heather Ward 'cause I was a single mother and I did well at the course so they pushed me through. It was a two year full time course and I did three days working and two days in the college 8.00 – 3.30. I was part subsidized through Abstudy and part through single parent pension and my daughter went to childcare while I was doing that course.*

1:Q. So when you were doing the course did you find it very difficult to remain on track – driven toward your goal?

1.A. *Very, very difficult. Every now and then I wanted to withdraw and like go to my parents and say that I couldn't afford to do it anymore, I couldn't afford to live, pay my house, pay for things and I was frightened of failing. It really got me down and they talked to me and made me see that it*

would be silly to give up. I just had a push-bike at the time and then I would go to their house everynight for meals. And that would save me buying food. And then on the weekends, my daughter and I had the weekends to unwind. Mum would take my daughter so I could relax. Then if I needed to study and I was late night studying mum would look after my daughter and I had a lot of parent back-up. Without my mother's support don't think I would have got through the course.

2.Q. When you were getting to post compulsory age, were you influenced by anything that your mother said or did that got you thinking about higher education?

2.A. Yes I was very, very proud with my mother 'cause she had to leave school very, very young and yet she worked towards a good job in Native Welfare. She has a high job in the community and she started off as a shearers cook. She was doing her leaving certificate when we were doing ours in school and I was so proud of her for doing that. So I knew that I had to do something too to make her proud of me.

3.Q. How would you classify her as a role model? If you were going to give her a grading what would you give her?

3.A. I'd give her ten out of ten because I know the life she had from a very, very rough and poor as a child, where they just wore hessian bags to school. They walked up to twelve miles a day to go to school and they lived at 12 mile camp. And then when she was married to my Dad it was all brutal. She came all the way from that to now where she is moving high level in Aboriginal Affairs Department. And it is a great achievement

and she did her leaving and she's got a Bachelor of Applied Science Degree. All those things I give her 10/10.

4.Q. What do you think are the obstacles that Aboriginal women have to overcome in the Education System? Do you think that there are any barriers to participation?

4.A. *Oh yes there are a few barriers. If your like a single parent and you've got a child and you can't get childcare and support and you can't take a day off college to look after that child and there's no support as in family network around then it's very, very hard and stops you going to college and if they are continually sick with like asthma or things like that when, you end up your course and staying home to look after that child until they are old enough to go to school. Children... sometimes you know you put the children first before yourself and sort the children out first before you think of yourself as a mother.*

5.Q. So, when it was suggested that you go back to study and do your training, what were the thoughts that went through your mind, can you remember?

5.A. *I felt frightened 'cause I didn't know how to spell and read properly so well and I didn't know how to speak in public and I also knew that I would really have to discipline myself strongly. I thought - being in a classroom just put the fear in me. Writing essays and assignments and answering people and being responsible. In a childcare centre really I didn't want to do it. I tried to look for the easiest way out. But I knew one day, one day I would have to do it for my daughter's sake so that I would be somebody*

that she would be proud of me. I wouldn't be at home all the time. I'd be someone that she could be proud of.

6.Q. And what about your eldest daughter do you think she maintains a drive to obtain qualifications?

6.A. *Oh yes she's got very high ambitions on what she wants. She wants to be an accountant or a lawyer and she studies hard all the time with figures and computers and writes letters to the school newspaper. She's been on the Student Council since she was in Year 4 so that she can make decisions for everybody else. So she can negotiate. Yeah, she's got high ambitions to be somebody, of what she wants to be, so she can be somebody that we are proud of too. So I want to be a good role - model for my daughter, so that she will be proud of me just like I'm proud of my mother.*

7.Q What are characteristics or personality traits that she has that you admire?

7.A. *She inspires you in a lot of ways as being always in dress standards high dress standards. Always looking presentable. Always being an individual, not to suit others, what suits you. Be yourself – don't wear what anyone else wears. Dress so that people take notice of you so that they can recognise you as being an individual. She has always encouraged us to speak our mind. But think about it before you speak it. But if you think you right stand up and say. Don't let other people put it over you. Whenever I say who my mother is people say "Oh yes, I know*

her” She speaks her mind and that’s what she encourage us to do and I do that too with my children.

8.Q. So the fact that she’s a strong woman do you think that you’ve modelled yourself on her?

8.A. *I do and her organization skills they’re wonderful.*

9.Q. Do you think this influence will be generational and so you've been influenced by your mum and your daughters' by you and what about your little girl?

9.A. *My eldest is already her own identify. She’s a great organiser making decisions. Organises everything at work. Very bossy. I listen to her at daycare. We set a lot of rules for my eldest girl – she knows what the rules are.*

APPENDIX 2C

Values, Beliefs, Attitudes, Expectations of Aboriginal Mothers and Daughters

DAUGHTERS' Beliefs/Attitudes	MOTHERS' Beliefs/Attitudes/Expectations
Belief of Mother as the significant factor when achievement in qualifications	Belief in herself (Mother) as the significant factor in her (Daughter) in achieving qualification.
Approachability of Mother	Belief of children in having a mother who was strong and skilful in improvising
Pride in Mothers own achievements – working and academic	Mother as the pivotal force of the family
Value of mother as a role model to herself and others	Belief in dominant woman from the matrilineal and patrilineal side extremely influential
Mothers qualifications as a means of empowerment and economic independence	Sending her Daughter away to boarding school to give her another perspective on life
Value in being a role model for her daughters	Verbalised value of tertiary qualifications
Belief in mothers opinion	Strength of daughter
Belief in mothers ability/vision	Strength of women as the drivers of the community
Belief in the devotion of her children	Equality between males and females
Belief of mother as being strong and capable	Belief that strong discipline is essential for children
Belief in possibility of failure due to perceived lack of English literacy skills	Belief in own academic prowess
Strong characteristics coming through with the next generation	Initiative to make ones own destiny
Optimism in trying to gain employment	Verbalised belief in daughters ability to succeed
Risk-Taking- in applying to study a course at diploma level	Encouragement
Tenacity in staying in the course despite obstacles	Unconditional backup
Proud of mother striving to achieve her full potential	Tenacity of mother
For her mother to be there always available to talk and a listen to her	Equality of sexes
Family network to assist with care of dependant grandchild	Strong willed as a characteristic of all women in the immediate and extended family
Own money through course an asset	Inner strength of women Encouragement to fulfil potential
Own house and independence important	Attainment of degree gives one confidence
Economic Independence	To be better than brothers
Parental pride in daughter	Expectation of survival
Welcoming home to immediate and extended family meals provided for daughter and granddaughter in order to cut costs	That one grows up like ones parents
Saving on consumable expenses	Role model to her own daughters
Mother as role model in the working environment especially in the way she presented herself, well groomed	Granddaughters and daughters would achieve goal just like she had done that not only do that they have their Mum but lots of other women to support them as well.
Strong dominant women as role models	Discipline of children very important

APPENDIX 2D.

ENVIRONMENTS CREATED BY ABORIGINALMOTHERS FOR THEIR DAUGHTERS

Physical environment	Emotional environment
Cooking, cleaning, washing	Baby sitting and financial support
Happy extended home environment	Emotional support – talking and listening
Relaxation time	Closeness to family
Baby sitting for study purposes	Status of mother as an authority figure in the Aboriginal and wider community
Saving on consumable expenses – assistance given by parents.	Perception of self as strong and tenacious
Payment of bills	Verbalized encouragement to continue on with studies
Own money, own house – finances supplemented by parents.	Verbalized the negatives of giving up studies
	Praise for achievements
	Verbalised – “we are <i>always there for you</i> ”.

CASE STUDY 5. MOTHER 3.URBAN / TRADITIONAL

Section 1. *I was born in Beagle Bay. I went to the Catholic School in Broome, St. Mary's and I feel that I had a very good education. In those days the nuns felt it was very important for us to learn how to read and write. And I think that they were fairly successful in achieving that with most of us. I was sent down to Perth for my high school until the kind of scholarship that I was on finished and then I came back.*

Section 2. *I had 11 children. Many of children went on to do their TAE/TEE 'cause I've always said to them that at least if they do their TEE then they have always got it to use later. It's a feather in their cap. I think that the Year 10 is a critical time for parents to start talking about their children's careers, you know guiding them.*

Section 3. *With my daughter I wanted her to make the most out of her life and have the opportunities that I didn't have. I encouraged her to go to Year 12 'cause I said that you can always come back to it. So we talked about nursing – I felt that general nursing would have been the best qualification for her – but I always felt that it was her decision that she did enrolled nursing. But anyway... when she graduated I was full of pride... a bit teary really, I think she was teary but happy too.*

Section 4. *She was a very hard headed but good girl. When her father and I split up – she went to live with him to look after the little ones. She had a big responsibility on her – going to school and rearing the kids.*

She used to ring me up heaps – and we used to talk a lot on the phone and work through her problems. I had to encourage her a lot in those days 'cause when she about the 15 age – lots of her friends left school. She used to cry a lot 'cause they teased her but I'd say, "Don't take any notice of them. They are only jealous". They were always trying to cut her down. Perhaps they knew how clever she was and that was why they were jealous.

Anyway she went on to do her Year 12 and I was so pleased for that and after a time she decided that she wanted to do nursing up here in Port Hedland. She was close to her family so she didn't want to have to leave again.

Section 5. *I think although I didn't rear her up for many years, that we are still close. She always asks my advice and always has done although I don't really pressure her to make the decision that I may want.*

When she ran away with her husband I was very upset because I knew that he was not the right man for her but I was glad that she had her qualification if she ever needed it. I think all the children know how important I think education is and if I had my time over again things would be a lot different.

I know that she didn't live with me very much when she was growing up so there weren't those physical things that mothers do. But I was always there in South Hedland just a phone call away when she returned from Perth.

Section 6. *I think having to do it hard – like look after her brothers and sisters gave her other skills. But as for the advice and support in other ways – like someone to talk to – I was there.*

APPENDIX 3B

CASE STUDY 6. DAUGHTER 3. URBAN

Section 1. *I was born in Broome, West Australia quite by accident. My mother was attending a funeral of a relative and went into labour. There are eleven children in the family and I am the fourth in line. All my other brothers and sisters were born in Port Hedland. I grew up in Port Hedland and attended the local Catholic Primary School.*

Section 2. *I went to boarding school for one year of high school. That was a Catholic School. That was Stella Maris in Geraldton. After that I came back to Port Hedland and my mother didn't believe that these was enough education in this town and so she arranged for me to go to Perth to another high school. I then went to an Aboriginal hostel at Subiaco and went to Hollywood High School which was very nerve racking I suppose you would describe it. It was a big school and I think when I look back I didn't identify with any other Aboriginal people, there weren't too many Aboriginal people at that school. It was very hard.*

Section 3. *I am not too sure who organised for me to go to that school whether it was the hostel or my mother. Most of that time I spent with my head on the desk crying too afraid to life my head up, ridicule, teasing, you know?*

The teacher was not aware of this. She had a big class and I think she preferred not to notice at it meant complications for the rest of the students. I was in the minority so it was easier for her to go with the majority.

My reports came back and I was really good but emotionally, like I said, I spent most of my time crying and the tissue box was passed down to me everyday without fail.

Section 4. *There was one girl did associate with, an Indian girl and I think she was in the same boat. So that was in 1978 and that was a big step for me 'cause I'd always been protected in the Catholic system where we were all treated well and equally. And then I went to my first State School and it was posh, real flash. Everyone has the latest of everything so I didn't fit in either that way. There was one other child that was good to me, he had a disability, I think we all grouped together cause we were different. I cried all the time and rang up and said "I wanna come home" and my mother said "Don't be silly, you'll be right."*

Section 5. *At that time my parents broke up and my Dad wanted me to stay at home and look after the little ones and bring them up. My mother had other intentions. She wanted me to pursue my education. She believed in me and I was also ... I didn't want to go to the high school in Hedland because I was afraid of the real traditional Aboriginal ways. They use to sing out to me or say what they would do to me. So that was another reason why I wanted to go away.*

1.Q. **How far back can you remember in your life saying "Oh you've got to get an education", or something to that effect.**

1.A. *Can right back as far as I can remember, right back to primary school. Mum was always an influence and I'll always look up to her. I used to look at the way that she carried herself with dignity and I always wished to be like her. She turned around always sketching and drawing and that where I picked up my love for art. I used to watch the way she'd carry herself, yes, despite our problems at home. I think the shock. I didn't*

realize what being Aboriginal was until I went away from the Catholic school and the big shock came when we were discussing Captain Cook and something about the natives came up and everyone in the class and looked at me and my cousin and I thought "Well, what is a Native?" and when I asked it was like 'Shoo, don't ask those things'. And we I went back to my Nana, and then it clicked there was a Native hospital up the road from us and then I clicked those must be the Aboriginals and I never asked questions cause I was told we don't talk about those people. We just did a lot of looking and listening and put things together myself.

2.Q. So you didn't associate yourself at all with "those other people"?

2.A. *No, I didn't.*

3.Q. Because you weren't treated any differently at the Catholic School?

3.A. *Yeah, that's right.*

4.Q. So apart from the verbal (talking about) did she ever indicate to you "You've gotta get a good education?"

4.A. *Yes, yes she did in her own way of talking and I really think it was her encouragement and support that got me through all the rough patches you know and through to graduating. I know after I went to that high school – went to Swanbourne after that. That was OK, it was still hard. My grandmother was sick so I had to come back to Hedland in what they called 2nd Semester now. And so I went to Hedland High School to be closer to my family when my mother's mother was dying. So that's what*

I can remember of that. Why I came home, 'cause I just started settling into Perth! So, then I spent the rest of my high school in Hedland and that was when my Mum became influential in helping me what career path to take in my education.

5.Q. How old were you then?

5.A. *I was fifteen and she encouraged me to do my TEE and all my peers were out having a good time and plus I was looking after my brothers and sisters. I didn't grow up with my mother then but she was always there for me. Just a phone call away. We had the distance between Port and South Hedland. I was in Port and she was in South. So, at this time I was living with my father, which wasn't very nice at the time. He used to drink quite a bit and he just expected me to look after the kids. You had to do the housework, do the shopping and go to school as well and to organise the children's homework.*

6.Q. So he expected you to carry a grown woman's load and more?

6.A. *My mother encouraged the other children to go through their education. Dad had a negative way but Mum was positive. I think she was disappointed that the older three didn't go on – she never let on though. To Year 12, I was the first one to go through to Year 12 and that was really hard and I was really, really scared that I'd fail. I was the only Aboriginal student in Year 12 so I was teased by the other Aboriginal peer students or they tried to cut me down for trying to be too (white). "Ah you think you're white".*

And because of that I stayed on and kept right through my education, I didn't fit in with their ideals, I didn't like their mucking around with boys and drinking and smoking and wagging school. And I guess that the structure and discipline at the Catholic School as well as looking after the kids was good discipline – I just didn't have any free time and all my energy was put into sport – my release was to do sport.

7.Q. And so, did you feel that your Mum's expectation was there all the time. It might have been positive or negative? Was it more your decision or your mother's decision?

7.A. *No, I don't think it was my mother's... we talked about what I'd like to do and I said that "I'd like to do nursing". I think that was because the Native Hospital was just down the road from us and down the other end of the road was the big hospital. I spent a lot of my time going in and out of those hospitals seeing babies being born when my mother had a new baby. My Nana worked at the Native hospital and decided to look after babies.*

Section 6. *I actually went to Art initially I went to Curtin (which was W.A.I.T) then there was 500 other students it took a whole day of interviews and sitting and I thought if this is what Art is going to be then I don't want anything to do with it. It was so draining. I thought that art was for fun and something that would come natural. It was also a daunting experience for our Aboriginal student with thousands of people there at the campus. And once again I was one of the few Aboriginal students.*

Section 7. *I can remember all this pressure the day we did our exams about the aggregate. It was the scaling test at the regional centres.*

I felt pressured doing the TEE and when they said we were competing with the rest of the State well that was the worst thing they could have said to me as I went to sit my exams. If I hadn't of known about that I would have been fine.

Section 8. *I did my Enrolled Nursing at Port Hedland Regional Hospital – but that is another area that I wasn't informed as well – even though my mother said that she tried to tell me. I though you started off as a pinkie and progressed to a registered nurse. I didn't realize that they two different courses.*

I realized that and then I applied with the W.A. School of Nursing and I was accepted, then I refused 'cause I had just met my husband and he threatened that if I went on I would never see him again. So I eloped with him. I think she had a desire for me to finish it.

Section 9. *I think my mother and father were both very intelligent people. My mother, my mother's dad both came to my graduation. My proudest day that was and I was so happy to see the look on their faces.*

APPENDIX 3C

Values, Beliefs, Attitudes and Expectations of Aboriginal Mothers and Daughters

DAUGHTER 3: urban diversification	MOTHER 3: urban / rural diversification
Value of Catholic education as equitably based	Catholic education provides sound educational grounding
Valued mother as role model for education, art and mothering	Expectation of education to at least Year 12
Pride in the way that mother carried herself	Freedom to make own decisions
Devotion to the family unit.	Strength to resist peer group
Valued mother and father as very intelligent people	Decision to do nursing was daughters
Structure and discipline of the Catholic schooling system as a major contributor to her success	Being close to family for support
Belief that the town of Port Hedland didn't provide enough adequate education	Transference of value of importance of education from mother to children
Believed that it was good for children to be sent to boarding school	Value of mother who cared
Fear of the future	Belief in the structure and discipline of Catholic schooling system as a major contributor to daughter's success
Fear of competition eg. Scaling test	Year 10 is critical intervention period to direct children toward careers
Life would be difficult if sent to study in Perth due to being isolated from the family	General nursing as the best qualification for her daughter
Depressed attitude to school whilst in Perth studying	Difficult childhood experiences strengthened her daughter
Disciplined over the phone	Educational qualifications as the single greatest factor to independence
Tenacity on overcoming adversity	Daughter has learnt from mother's life experiences
Wisdom articulated by mother in the giving of advice	Felt that it was important for children to obtain TEE / TAE / YEAR 12.
Mother as dominant role model	Important to obtain a sound education
Bad experience at tertiary institution influenced decision to study nursing in home environment	Importance of mother being around as support person
Expectation of other Aboriginal students for her not to achieve	Desire to be close to her family
Didn't meet the expectations of other peers who were not motivated by school	Decision about career choice made in consultation with mother – together they explored options
Mother articulated the importance of a sound education	Decision influenced by native hospital down the road
Expectation to also look after brothers and sisters and do the housework	Expectations to achieve high levels of literacy
	Verbalised expectations to achieve TEE
	Expectation to fulfil her potential
	Expectation that daughter would return home after daughter's marriage breakup
	Advice and expectations conveyed subtly
	Expectation that she would look after brothers and sisters when living with her father

ENVIRONMENTS CREATED BY ABORIGINAL MOTHERS FOR THEIR DAUGHTERS

Physical Environment	Emotional Environment
Available locally to see and talk to	Always available to be rung up on the phone
Mother and father both attended her graduation	Available to talk and listen
Husband major barrier to further participation In General nursing degree	Talked about problems over the phone
Home to go to / alternative home of mothers	Strong encouragement when she was about 15yrs and returned home from boarding school because of peer group pressure not to achieve
Looking after younger siblings helped organise her time	Mother's 'shoulder to cry on'.
Being away at school assisted in developing greater Independence and motivation despite difficulties	Linked directly to emotional support of mother whilst studying in Perth.
	Mother tuned daughter in when she cried and was told not to be silly.
	Aboriginal Identity gained later in teenage years.
	Advice given by mother wasn't understood consequences suffered enrolled nursing as compared to General nursing
	Mother and father demonstrated pride at their daughter's graduation

Case Study 7.MOTHER 4.TRADITIONAL

1.Q Can we begin by just talking a little bit about where you were born and a little about your experiences as a child?

1.A. *Well, I was born on a station in the Hamersley Ranges. Things were quite good there when I was very little. But as I got to older – you know things changed and because I had white in me... the welfare and police kept comin' around trying to take us kids off our parents. The Aboriginal people living there on the stations just couldn't relax 'cause you never know when the welfare would come. So we were always moving around from one place to another. My parents they had to come up with all sorts of tricks so that the welfare people could not find us kids. Sometimes a mob of us kids would be taken away and hidden for days 'cause you never know when they'd come. Those welfare mob were very hard... cruel.*

One day they turn up all of a sudden like and my parents told me in my language "Run, Run, Run". And I ran so hard my chest hurt. They never caught me. I was too good for them. It was frightening for us kids and for all the Aboriginal people on the station.

So we had to move around a lot, always on the move. Finally when I was older they gave up cause I was too old to take.

2.Q. So when you grew up and married, did you have many ideas in your head on how you wanted to rear your children?

2.A. *Yeah, ... well you know because ... we were moving around a lot as kids we never had the opportunity to learn to read and write and this had been hard for me. Sometimes, I been real shamed 'cause I haven't been able to read something easy.*

'Cause we were Aboriginal, we weren't allowed in a lot of the schools and because we grew up in the bush, there were no schools.

This has made me want the best for my kids and I tried hard... to make sure they had what they needed for school.

3.Q. **Can you tell me how you did that?**

3.A. *Yeah, well, we never had very much and we lived in tents a lot of the time but my kids always had clean clothes and food in their bellies. We had to walk them to school and sometimes it was a long and hot walk to the school and sometimes the big kids well they'd have to carry the little ones cause they were so grumpy and tired.*

Then, when they got older it was a little bit easier cause my big kids they help with the little ones just like having another mum and dad. They had to help me 'cause I was working too.

When we moved I got a job cooking, cleaning, ironing, sewing for white people, whatever bring in a little bit extra money...you know!

4.Q. **Do you think that extra money helped educate the children?**

4.A. *Sure, I did not have it the kids wouldn't have the things for school...pencils, paper... you know!*

5.Q. **When their daughter was growing up what did you say to her to encourage her in her education?**

5.A. *Well, to tell the truth, I didn't say much, you know. I think she knew. But, she was always a clever girl and her big brother and sister – they taught her to read and write before she went to school. She was way out front of those other kids.*

But ... she always want to be a teacher. So my husband and me we gave her what we could... to help get her there.

6.Q. **Did you have to push her?**

6.A. *Oh, no, never ... she always love going to school, except when she moved to Perth to go to boarding school. She'd be crying... crying.. on the phone .. always on the phone to me... I'd listen and I'd tell her that it would be alright ... and she'd see us soon in holidays. But it was hard for her ... and us...*

... You know, I never went to school and I made sure my kids went to school everyday. Even my big girl, well we had to fight to get her into school at Onslow. But nobody was going to stop my kids from going to school.

7.Q. **Do you think your experiences growing up have made you want to make sure that life is different for your kids?**

7.A. *Yeah, well although I didn't have a white education, I know my kids need education to get a good job... that will make them feel good about themselves too. Then they will have money to help their kids and family.*

..... I guess too the kids, they heard us talking about the hard times and they went through hard times too. ...So they want a life that is not so hard.

I know my girl, she wants to help her people. You know... help them keep their culture and language. She's gone on to study language so she can do that too.

8.Q. What about when she was growing up did you ever say “I want you to get a good education” (or) “I want you to be This or that when you grow up?”

8.A. No, no never. She always make up her own mind. I always believe in her too, that she would make the right decision about things. She's a real good girl. She got a good kind heart, and she has always wanted to help me and help other people too. I always trust her to make the right decisions.

9.Q. And what about you, when she got upset what did she do?

9.A. We always talk and listen to each other and our problems we always share ... our problems too ... The same with good things that happen. We share them too. She's always good at laughing about things too. But she rings me all the time. She talks I listen, I talk she listen.

I don't tell her too much that I'm proud of her. I tell everyone else too I should tell her more. But she knows.

She knows too what she wants And she works hard to get what she wants. And I just say OK that good that you're doing that.

10.Q. So you encourage her in that way?

10.A. *Yeah, just quiet like – you know.*

Case Study 8. DAUGHTER 4. TRADITIONAL / URBAN

1.Q. Can you tell me a little bit of where you were born and grew up?

1.A. *I was in the Pilbara and both my parents were from the Hamersley Group Ranges and I am the third youngest child of the eight people in our family. By the time I came along, my parents had been relocated to the coastal areas.*

2.Q. What caused their relocation?

2.A. *Their relocation was caused indirectly (according to my interpretation) because of the policies and practices of the 1905 Aborigines Act. When my parents started to move as a result of the government officers coming around at certain times of their life... coming around making an attempt to take mum from her parents...then that caused my mum's parents each time to run away for her safety and for her ability to stay with her parents they had to keep moving.*

3.Q. So your parents were of mixed ancestry?

3.A. *Yeah, my mum was. The first time that my mum moved when she was thirteen (13) years old and she was living with her parents at Hamersley station when one day the station manager's wife came to the homestead to where they were living the camp to take my mother away. My parents told her to start running – she said she must have ran for a mile – she*

remembers running for a long time – before she stopped 'cause they told her to run. But apparently that wasn't the first time that they had come to take her. Another time they came to take her, her parents buried her in a hole in the ground and covered it up with leaves and sand and they were doing things like that to the kids. And so your mother relocated and married my father who was from another station in the Hamersley ranges. The authorities came a few months later to lay and take her again when they found out where she was but by then she'd gotten too old to be placed in the care of someone else.

4.Q. So your mother once she relocated, when did she go to school?

4.A. *She didn't go to school.*

5.Q. Right, so she didn't go to school because of the policy in place at the time?

5.A. *Well because I think where they lived there weren't any schools, plus the schools were set up on the coastal areas and they were excluded from participating anyway 'til the late sixties. Yeah, the other thing was the "walkoff" by Aboriginal people off the pastoral stations as a protest to the wages they were receiving at the time.*

6.Q. So your mother and father spent quite a large part of their life together in the Hamersley ranges and then after the strike for equal wages for Aboriginal people a lot of Aboriginal people were kicked off the pastoral stations – that had been their traditional land.

6.A. *That was when a lot of Aboriginal people started grieving and basically a lot of Aboriginal people and their families were moving from homestead to homestead trying to find work. Some people were still employed but they were treated really badly, not being paid just being paid rations. And had food at that white flour, sugar, grain. Luckily, they still had their skills to go and get bush food.*

6.Q. **So when did your mother marry your father?**

6.A. *They met while she was going from Hamersley to Walkely station. They got married at Walkely station. They actually got married formerly in Roebourne. I think it was a civil ceremony.*

7.Q. **And I suppose the children came along one by one. Where were they living then?**

7.A. *Mum and Dad were still living in the Hamersley ranges. We were visiting quite regularly Roebourne. It was the only township that was fairly well established before the 1950's. And before that my Nana and her husband had been visiting Roebourne.*

8.Q. **Was Roebourne the gathering area for many people?**

8.A. *People just came from the Hamersley to Roebourne for whatever reason. Probably just because it was a major township at the time; to see friends and get food. And then they lived in the Hamersley ranges toward the 1950's they started moving to stations that were closer to the coastal areas. But not living in Onslow or anything... always on the stations or*

around the stations. In the early 60's they moved into town they still visited the Hamersley ranges frequently and my Dad still did right up until the time he died.

By then a lot Aboriginal people had no place to go back on their traditional land and there were some towns that were set up in the mining era that excluded people from their traditional lands. They were called "closed towns" and they remained "closed towns" til the 1980's. They were Tom Price, Paraburdoo and some others. So, Aboriginal people who had carried on their customs and traditions couldn't anymore because they had been excluded and relocated.

9.Q. Can you remember where and when you started school?

9.A. *I started school in 1965 and my first year of pre-school.*

10.Q. Did you like school, or do you remember feeling "I don't want to be here"?

10.A. *Um, I didn't mind pre-school but I can remember that was a long way to walk to pre-school. Because we lived in the reserve it was a long way to walk for a little girl, especially in the hot weather.*

11.Q. As you moved on in school, can you remember your mother encouraging about education and making sure that you got to school?

12.A. *By the time I was born I'd already my elder brothers and sisters were going the education system. My parents had always talked about how*

they have to fight to get the Aboriginal kids into the school and my sister was one of the few Aboriginal kids that the Aboriginal people in Onslow had to fight for - for their education. So by the time I came along, they'd almost worked out a lot of the problems.

But the school that they went to it wasn't a school building, it was a cyclone shed – that was the pre-school. It had a wooden floor and two small windows... no air-conditioning and no fans.

13.Q. So as you moved through the educational system, were you a good student do you think?

13.A. *Yeah, I was always a good student. I was good 'cause I was always surrounded by people that wanted to help me – like my mum who made sure that we were well cared for and like one of my elder brothers, he used to read comic books. So when I was a kid, I started reading them even before I went to pre-school so that by the time I went to school...so I knew how to read before I went to pre-school. And then I started to realize that I enjoyed reading.*

So by the time I went to primary school, I was slightly ahead of other kids in the class. So much so that by the time I was in Year Four (4), I was doing the literacy classes in the Year Seven (7) class.

14.Q. So you had well established literacy at an early age due to your other siblings really?

14.A. *Yeah... and Mum provided the things we needed for school like pencils, paper, books, cause she used to work too even though she couldn't read/write.*

15.Q. Has your mother learnt to read and write since then?

15.A. *She learnt basic literacy and numeracy, but she has been slightly resistant but compared to my Dad he was more willing to learn and he was starting to read and write quite well before he “passed on”.*

16.Q. Why do you think your mother was resistant?

16.A. *Well she had eight children and she was always so busy – so I guess she was pretty well exhausted a lot of the time. She was always struggling to make ends meet and to provide the best for all of us. But she always kept a brave face and that taught me to be a fighter.*

17.Q. My mother has always worked. She’s been a working mum most of her life?

17.A. *On the station she cooked and cleaned and did domestic work. When they ended up in Onslow she was still doing domestic work for the non-Aboriginal people in the town. Really poor wages, hardly for cooking, cleaning and ironing. All her life she had domestic work.*

18.Q. So do you think she was a good role model in terms of working hard and sticking at things?

18.A. *She was – she was an excellent role model.*

19.Q. What about your brothers and sisters?

19.A. *My older sister whose passed away, when I went to school she became a mother figure and she was a great help to my mum.*

When we were in Onslow as we got older, my mum and dad didn't have a house in Onslow. In the first years of our life we lived in tents.

Dad battled but he always seemed to have a truck, so that became our home. Then when we eventually moved into my mum's mother's house, when she couldn't care for herself. It was a two-bedroom house, no running water, wood stove in the middle, toilet outside – basic conditions.

20.Q. What did your mother do that you feel really supported you in your education and growing up?

20.A. *As a working mum she was able to provide me with the material things that I needed for school. Made sure we were comfortable at home, making sure you had school materials. So they were really supportive and really encouraging in my education. She always knew that I would continue on in my education. I think because I loved reading so much – her intuition.*

21.Q. Do you think she was a visionary as well?

21.A. *Yeah, they really helped map out my future. I think that she could really see how things would change in Aboriginal society.*

22.Q. So you did your TEE?

22.A. *Yeah, I went straight into teaching but I was fourteen/fifteen when I decided that I wanted to teach. I got an entry into Teacher's College and then when I was in my second year at teacher's college, my dad died. So I came home for a little while and when I came home I learnt cultural knowledge too. That had been neglected 'cause I had been so taken up with mainstream education and that cultural knowledge was taught to me by other family women. Then I went back to college, but when I came home it was too hard. It had such a negative impact on me so that when I went back the following year it was too hard to continue my education. So I deferred for a year and finished my studies but teaching was something that I decided that I wanted to do early in my life so I did it.*

23.Q. **So you always very focused as to what you wanted to achieve?**

23.A. *Yeah, and they were so proud when I got into teachers college. She set up the physical environment, clean clothes, washing facilities. She made sure too that we went to school. She went to work and we went to school. That was hard for her 'cause she had to walk us to school. Three of us had to go to school.*

24.Q. **So when you got to high school, did you go on to TEE?**

24.A. *Because there wasn't a high school in Onslow I had to be sent away to school. But it was really hard for me that first year, and I was only 11 when I left home, 'cause I was too young to be away from my parents. The first year was terrible. I was really unsettled but I had a good friend – a year older than me and we were really close. It took me ages to get used to being away from my parents. As I got older and with the support*

and thinking that I could cope, I decided to go to Perth and then there was often being in Perth for a couple of years I thought I might leave school now and I was worried about my parents. But they strongly encouraged me to stay and I guess that decision / advice was based on their own life's experience. And they realized and said that the only way for anyone in our family to get a satisfactory wage was to gain an education first.

25.Q. So would you say that there was definitely influential people in your life that encouraged you in your education? Who do you think was the most influential?

25.A. *I guess there was at different stages of my life there was different people that influenced my education. My elder brother and elder sister for most of my life, as well as my mum especially, and of course my dad too.*

26.Q. Did mum and dad almost take turns or were they always a solid unit? In other words, could you classify them on the same scale as being equivalent in their influence?

26.A. *Things happened to me when I was younger that seemed to provide that extra support. Like when I was six, I was hit by a car, from that time they seemed to have nurtured me a bit more than my other brothers and sisters. So I think it might have been that 'cause it nearly killed me. I guess too that it might have been the trauma that made them want to help me fulfill my dreams.*

27.Q. What postgraduate studies have you taken on since then?

27.A. *Well, at the moment I'm doing a linguistics degree.*

28.Q. And does mum take a strong interest in what you do – is she still verbally encouraging?

28.A. *Yeah, she still interested, and I talk to her quite regularly on the phone, and even now she still asks how I'm going.*

29.Q. She must be very proud of you?

29.A. *Yeah, she doesn't say it to me but I know that she says it a lot to other people and they pass it on and I know for sure that I couldn't have achieved everything I have without her support especially.*
With my cultural learning, well, after I went through mainstream education I had to go back to relearn the cultural and language education and she has been so supportive of my work. She has taught me too, these cultural things.

Values, Attitudes, Beliefs, and Expectations of Aboriginal Mothers and Daughters

DAUGHTER 1 (Urban Relocation)	MOTHER 3 (Traditional Relocation)
Belief in the holding together of the family unit	Parents believed that to get a satisfactory wage it was important to gain an education first
Family visited Roebourne regularly to meet with other family to maintain links	Mother believed that a good education was essential to her success for children's lives
Visited the Traditional homelands regularly	In depth knowledge and understanding of her mother and fathers experiences as children not being able to have an education as a contributor to encouraging her daughter
Parent's experiences in fighting for education significant.	Belief that her daughter knew how proud she was of her
Strong demonstration of parent's of the value of education	Belief that she encouraged her daughter in a quiet way
Forced relocation of parents	Belief that she maintained contact and encouragement even through difficult times
Maternal experience of lack of western education has influenced daughter to achieve her educational goals	Value of laughing and talking assisted her daughter
Government policy in preventing participation in school strongly influenced daughter	Belief that her daughter was a good girl
Belief that she had a good education from pre – school to tertiary levels	Belief that her daughter would make up her own mind and make the right decision
Belief that she was a little more nurtured than other siblings	Value of her strength and tenacity
Belief that she knew that she wanted to be a teacher from Year 4 onwards and strove to achieve her goals	Always encouraged / consoled her on the phone that everything would be alright
Personal experiences in youth laid foundation for extra support from parents	Belief that no-one was going to stop her children from getting an education
Fathers premature death whilst she was at teachers college had a negative impact	She knew that it was very hard for her daughter being away from the family
Belief that she was goal – directed from an early age	Belief that her difficult experiences as a child has influenced her children greatly
Belief that at different stages of her life that different people were influential	Belief that because she was a working mother that this assisted in being able to purchase the items that the children needed for school
Respect for parent aspirations / achievements despite adversity	
Mother as an excellent role model	Belief that her daughter was always strongly motivated
Parents demonstrated pride when qualification was obtained	Expected her to stay at school despite difficulties in boarding away in the city
Many decisions made on the reflection of parent's difficult life circumstances.	

APPENDIX 4D

ENVIRONMENTS CREATED BY ABORIGINAL MOTHERS FOR THEIR DAUGHTERS

Physical Environment	Emotional Environment
Clean clothes.	Lots of help and encouragement from elder brothers and sisters.
Washing, cooking, cleaning	Literacy skills already well developed by the time she went to school.
Comics and other reading material provided in the home, books, paper – school necessities.	Mother as role model – working mum's wage most of her life.
Shelter – tents and then small 2 bedroom house.	Domestic work for non- Aboriginal people.
Due to mother and father working extra resources could be obtained to support children going to school.	Mother made sure that she was well cared for.
Truck – became family home due to the family migrational movements	Self esteem enhanced due to the fact that she could read before she went to school was in advance of her peers.
Small two bedroom house shared with Grandmother - very basic – no running water, woodstove, no fans, outside toilet.	Self esteem continued to be supported because of advance literacy.
Mother made sure that we were comfortable at home	Brothers/sisters major role models.
Household routines structured to support children's schooling needs.	Parents really encouraging all the way through her schooling
	Parents strongly encouraging especially when she was away at boarding school and experiencing difficulties.
	Decisions making in educational areas based on parent's life experiences.
	Family environment structured and focused to support education of the children